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TWENTY YEARS AGO

Books For Girls

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.'

AND OTHERS

RESENTED IN MEMORY OF
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BOOKS FOR GIRLS.

A SERIES

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX,"

AND OTHERS.

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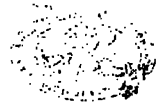

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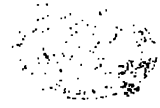

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

FROM THE

Journal of a Girl in her Teens.

EDITED BY THE

AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,
FRANKLIN SQUARE.
1872.

THE PREFACE

—WHICH will be only a few words.

This book is—as it purports to be—the *bonâ fide* Journal of a girl in her teens, kept by her during a short residence in Paris twenty years ago. It was put into my hands "just to amuse me," and I found it so interesting that I suggested its being recopied, with any alteration of names or disguise of incidents that was thought advisable, and sent back to me, subject to whatever editorial excisions I might deem necessary.

This was done; but my task has been light, for little was required. A few sentences condensed or transposed, an explanatory line added here and there, and the general supervision of a practiced author over a work originally "not meant for publication"—this was all. I have let the girl speak for herself. I have not even modified her passionate political opinions; they are true to girl-nature and a part of herself.

Neither have I omitted those portions of her Journal which describe the gay Paris life in which she mingled, the people she met therein, their sentiments and her own, on love, marriage, and other subjects usually tabooed in

girls' books. Why? Girls will think of these things—ay, and talk of them too. Is it not better that both their thoughts and their conversation should be guided so as to regard these mysteries, which each must soon find out for herself, earnestly, purely, sacredly? I believe so; and therefore I have left the book just as I found it. It tells no story—it points no moral: it is simply a picture of a young girl's life, painted by herself, in what most girls will recognize as natural colors—as fresh now as then. If a little too vivid, too brilliant, they are still natural. Do not all thing looks brighter and larger than reality, in our teens?

There is a good deal of French introduced, for which I make no apology. Any young reader who finds this a difficulty—why, the sooner she takes her grammar and dictionary in hand and conquers it, the better.

And so I give this girl's Journal to other girls, believing that it will do them no harm, but good, and only wishing that one day they may all be able to look back twenty years with as little need to be ashamed of their old selves as she who calls herself *Beatrice Walford.*

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

A Parisian Soirée 13

CHAPTER II.

The Coup d'État 50

CHAPTER III.

M. le Professeur 87

CHAPTER IV.

M. Émile 104

CHAPTER V.

The Jour de l'An 122

CHAPTER VI.

In the Faubourg St. Germain 133

CHAPTER VII.

Balls 164

CHAPTER VIII.

Paris in April 186

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

THE LUXEMBOURG AND THE CONCIERGERIE..... 201

CHAPTER X.

PARIS IN MAY 211

CHAPTER XI.

A FRENCH COUNTRY HOUSE..... 229

CHAPTER XII.

A FRENCH VILLAGE 258

CHAPTER XIII.

FRIENDS AND FÊTES..... 283

CHAPTER XIV.

AUTUMN DAYS 314

CHAPTER XV.

SIBYL'S LOT—AND MINE 345

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

CHAPTER I.

A PARISIAN SOIRÉE.

MORE than twenty years ago I, Beatrice Walford, paid my first visit to Paris. I was very young, fresh, and ardent; open-eyed, open-eared, eager to enjoy; prone to admire, and not unwilling to criticise. I started, to be sure, with a great contempt for the French character, believing that the men were monkeys, and not to be trusted; the women vixens, and given up to dress. This was all the mental provision I had made for my two years' residence among them. I came to the country almost in that state of innocence which finds it astonishing that the natives of France should speak French: I left it as little of a Frenchwoman as could be expected from the stubborn British individuality; but I lived there after the great law of French existence —I amused myself as much as I could. It

seemed an idle life, but Fate will let no life be idle. I walked carelessly among scenes and characters as though they had been but picture-galleries, and they turned into earnest studies. And now, looking back, as across a gulf of endless separation, my present existence — on which they have not left the smallest outward trace—seems yet filled with the foreign, familiar faces; the strange, soon beloved tongues; with the curious histories learned, the romances watched to their sweet or sad conclusion!

My first single emotion was one of delight at the radiant world in which I found myself. I was on a visit to a sister who, some six years before, had married a French gentleman of the *petite noblesse*, had become a widow, and, having lived a good deal in Paris, preferred still to reside there, but was very glad to have me, as she said, to give a little liveliness to her "*triste* home." I did not myself think it at all *triste* when I arrived. It was in that bright bit of Paris, the Avenue des Champs Élysées, making one of a line of elegant houses, all glittering in their bright white stone, with their moulded and gilded façades on each side of those broad, sunny walks, and their double avenue of trees. And then my sister's small, pretty apartment opened on me like a tiny

fairy palace, as, entering the antechamber, I heard the gay piano sounding, and peeped into the bright drawing-room within, a little shrine played on by the sunshine, gay and fragrant with flowers. And, like the nymph of flowers and fragrance herself, came forth my graceful sister to kiss and smile on me. Then, when the first vague happy greetings were over, she made me sit by the fire, and, throwing herself back in a low chair by my side (her favorite pretty attitude), played with her little baby, a red-and-white darling with two dancing sapphires of eyes. We were soon laughing together, for she was excitable and easily amused, and, though older by some years, more of a child than I.

The dear Sibyl! I never could describe her, she was such a delicate blending of counter-elements. The admiring Frenchman, *monsieur* or *ouvrier*, would pronounce her in the streets a *blonde angélique*, and I have known a lecture or concert room fill, as she entered, with a general murmur of pleasure, followed by the loudly whispered word *Anglaise*. And English certainly, refined and idealized to almost an exceptional creation, was that white nymph-like figure, with transparent complexion and golden-brown hair, and a kind of celestial sweet-

ness in her eyes and still smile. But beyond that charm I do not know that Sibyl was particularly British; perhaps, indeed, she seemed most so to a foreigner, as she seemed most French to a compatriot. But to me there was in her a life and play, a subtle archness, a foreign grace in dress, manner, and speech, that seemed to have been kindled in a warmer, more exciting atmosphere than ours. Perhaps she was something of a coquette, but I did not mind that.

"Why, Sibyl," I said, as I leaned out on the light iron *grillage* of the balcony, "it seems to me that one can see all Paris without stirring from one's place. All the world appears gathered into a picture before these windows for our amusement. From that bronze fountain, with its silvery jet and foam-halo, in the Place down there, to the Arc de Triomphe cut out in the blue air, it is a picture in a dream."

"There goes the president," said Sibyl; and I looked, though the name was not then much of a spell (for this was just before December 2, 1851). I saw a low-hung *calèche* with four horses, valets and postilions in livery of green and gold, and leaning back in it, with folded arms, a slight, inanimate-looking man, of clayey or rather leathery complexion, who, with wood-

en, immovable face, touched his hat now and then to the scant greetings of the passers-by.

This was twenty years ago. Then to me, as to the rest of that unforeseeing world, all was enjoyment—the enjoyment of eyes always pleased and never satiated. Our day was given, as were many after-days, to walking through this brilliant modern Paris, admiring her in her ordered and stately grace; then plunging into the ancient gloom and squalor of the older city, entering grand buildings, the shrines of past ages, hearing divine thunders and angelic voices in churches; then, at one step, plunging again into a torrent of human life, where the quick French nature seems to run like a light sound of laughter or music by our side. Sometimes we formed a party to *déjeuner* or dine in some shining, sumptuous café; and then it was time to return. Our first walk home, in a frosty brilliant afternoon, was by the south terrace of the Tuileries, ending in a broad esplanade, below which lay spread out at our feet the whole fair Place de la Concorde. There on one side stood the Madeleine, with its beautiful encircling colonnade, seeming to look across the granite obelisk and sparkling fountains of the Place to salute the pillared front of the Chamber of Depu-

ties, on the other side the river. The last sunshine rested on the upper part, and turned the wreathing frieze and cornice to gold. In a side-view we caught a lovely bit of the Seine —a glimpse of rosy water, with a suspension bridge's aërial arch flying lightly across it. It was as if a majestic city square, with all its marble architecture and sculpture, should suddenly open upon us from amidst stately woods —all clear and brightly calm in its framing of a wintry crystal atmosphere and a burning sunset.

It was always a pleasure to come back to our own street, with its regular clean white houses, its row of windows *à deux battants* on the upper stories, all opening down to the floor upon light balconies of prettily carved and gilt iron-work, the white and green *persiennes* thrown back against the walls, showing the muslin curtains within, and all shining as nothing in London ever shines. We approach our own house; the great double doors fly open at a touch of the bell and by the pull of a string, and before us appears a large, handsome court, with two or three glass doors at the end—one into the *concierge's* lodge, the others opening on the great common staircase. Within is another large court, built round by

the four sides of the house. The outer court is adorned with flowers in boxes, dahlias, oleanders, and orange-trees; a marble Venus stands at the foot of the staircase. As we pass the *concierge's* lodge I see through the glass door the comfortable-looking room, lighted with fire and candle, and that grim, respectable old dragon and his wife reclining at their ease in *fauteuils* placed opposite each other. In the lodge or the court is sometimes to be seen that prime French favorite, a superb Cyprus cat, with waving, plumy exuberance of fur. But when I inquire after him I am so often sternly told "Monsieur se promène," that I have given up this dissipated gentleman as scarcely a respectable acquaintance.

Then comes the wide staircase, up whose smooth, well-waxed parqueted steps we trip so easily. But stop, I must learn to walk demurely, at least when I am alone; for I am told by Sibyl's careful *bonne*, who watches over my morals, that on such occasions. "les demoiselles" must not run up stairs; they must go "la tête élevée," and leisurely, to show they are not ashamed to be seen. I must be careful, too, short-sighted as I am, to see the *concierge*, and to bow to him, for he is a man of lofty politeness, whose good manners I

ought at least to try to imitate; and, as Gabrielle says, nothing is so necessary to "demoiselles," nothing so carefully taught them in France, as a gracious and amiable deportment. So up we pass, only bowed to by some stranger-*locataire*, should he pass at the same time, each landing-place exhibiting the safely locked door of some elegant asylum in which a family may be dwelling, joyous yet quiet, as much "at home" as in an English country cottage. We reach our own: Sibyl and I each take possession of a deliciously elastic *causeuse*, all soft and rich with crimson velvet, see our own pleased, tired faces in many a gilded mirror, and discuss the incidents of the day.

"Now, you little barbarian," said Sibyl, a few days after my arrival, "I must take you into society this evening. Very often I have two or three friends who drop in, in a quiet way; but to-night we must go to Madame Gibbs's."

"Who is Madame Gibbs?" I asked.

"Oh, she is a queer little body—a Frenchwoman married to an Englishman, who piques herself on being quite English, though you won't think so. Her society is very mixed, but the party will just suit you as a beginning,

being quiet, yet very amusing. How do you think you shall like it, from the specimens you have seen to-day?"

"I must confess," I said, "I am not yet reconciled to black beards and mustaches, cigars, strange dresses, and prolonged stares. In fact, I long to kill every man I meet. But this you will say is illiberal."

"It seems so to me," said Sibyl, candidly; "but then I have been some years learning toleration. You know there are two things a Frenchman can never help using — his eyes and his tongue. As that dear M. Lamourette once said to me when, being younger, I objected a little to the staring process, no impertinence is intended; it is only an artless, spontaneous tribute to one's charms. '*Un homme naïf et ingénu comme moi*,' as he was pleased to say, 'can't help expressing his feelings.' But I have since grown so hardened and corrupted that when the more serious Émile asked me how I ventured to walk out alone, lest I should hear disagreeable things, I answered, with the innocence of fifteen, that what I heard was, to me, not disagreeable! But I don't wonder that you, Beatrice, are still perplexed by hearing various conjectures as to your nationality, and candid information about

your 'type,' your hair, and your complexion. Wait for this evening's experience. Frenchmen in the street and Frenchmen in the *salon* are very different. At any rate, don't utter these opinions of yours before Hermine, since, though she may very possibly think the same herself, she may also betray you to her countrymen."

Speak of the sun and you see its rays. Just as Sibyl ceased the door opened, and in came two ladies — an elder and a younger. The latter caught at once my beauty-loving eyes. They were Madame de Fleury—Sibyl's stepmother-in-law, who lived in the same hotel on a lower floor — and her young daughter Hermine, with whom I instantly made acquaintance. What a brilliant little French sylph she was, as she half tripped, half glided into the room, moving quickly and decidedly, her small, trim figure having just that happy degree of compression which gives slightness without stiffness! Her face I thought at first hard; young and fresh as it was, it had a metallic sharpness and clearness the very reverse of the soft, dreamy, veiled charm of youthful English beauty. She wore a smile—wore, I say advisedly, for she might have put it on with her dress — not soft or timid, but full of

a gay, brilliant, conquering sweetness all its own.

Hermine was very gracious to me. Had she met me in the street as a stranger, she would most likely have measured me with the eye of quick, unsparing criticism, which in a moment takes in the whole figure and dress of a person, in which not a spot, a wrinkle, or a fold, if out of the fashion, escapes observation; then might have turned away with that slight derisive smile so singularly suited to disconcert or provoke an Englishwoman. But now perhaps Hermine satisfied herself in that glance that my pretensions were not very formidable, my gown and bonnet having been obviously not made in Paris. Graceful and self-possessed, she came up and made her "felicitations" in a tone of affectionate interest, and with her light, ringing, singing voice, and that air, so delicately *empressé*, which attracts, flatters, and caresses to the highest degree. A pretty Frenchwoman who means to please knows how to manage the briefest meeting, the slightest chance-intercourse, especially with the other sex, be it only a handing from a *voiture*, a making way for her in the street, acknowledged by a bow, a smile, a "Merci, monsieur." She can turn it all into a little sentimental pas-

sage, by means of that charming manner they seem all to have, more or less, from the high-bred young countess to the poor fruit-woman at her stall. Some see harm in this: I, Beatrice Walford, never could. Is a peach less sweet for having a soft velvety cheek outside? —that is, when it is a sound peach, as peaches should be.

Hermine and I exchanged a few light sentences, I making in haste crude efforts to rival her manners, to smooth and refine my phrases into correct works of art, instead of trusting only to my downright *sans façon* English good-will, which felt quite put to shame by her exquisitely-polished conventionalities. But, alas! we spoke in a language of which not one word would come straight to my tongue when I wanted it. To my relief, Sibyl soon interposed, saying that it was time to dress for Madame Gibbs's. We withdrew together, leaving Hermine and her mother, who were already attired and prepared to accompany us.

"Just tell me a little about these *soirées*," I asked of my sister. "You know I have lived so long in a lonely corner of Cumberland that I feel giddy at this sudden plunge into Paris life, and may disgrace you with my blunders."

"Oh, the French are so indulgent," said

Sibyl; "they regard a foreigner's first crudities just as pretty, *piquant* novelties; to the newly-arrived all things are forgiven. True, it will not do to depend too long on this claim to indulgence; want of tact is regarded as a mortal sin, and we can be *méchant* enough when the first charm of novelty has worn off. But I will tell you the sort of thing it will be. One evening in every week a lady receives company, and her acquaintance, if once they have had an invitation, are expected always to come on that particular evening. However, they come or not as they like; the party is large or small as may happen; they dress as they please; they enter and depart with no ceremony beyond that of greeting their hostess; they stay long if they find it amusing, or only a few minutes if it is not so, or if they want to go elsewhere. The same people get a habit of frequenting the same places; mutual acquaintances have also their evenings; so that one often becomes intimate with a person whose family or even name one scarcely knows, and perhaps scarcely sees by daylight. There is no effort, no *gêne*. People here meet to talk, and do it with all their hearts. There is always the pleasant expectation of seeing again any body who has begun to interest one, and

the certainty of finding new faces and of watching foreign and amusing ways."

"Well, I shall like that, if only I need not talk a word for at least the first three evenings."

So said I, not knowing my fate, or rather not knowing myself.

Sibyl told me she should name no one beforehand—it was much more amusing to find people out for one's self—"Except Émile de Fleury, who is a sort of relation; he is Hermine's cousin, has lately left the École Polytechnique, and is in the army. That is all."

Our carriage rumbles and jumbles along the execrable pavements of the aristocratic Faubourg St. Germain, which is also the literary quarter, the colleges being chiefly there; and in this class of society lay our present acquaintance.

We stop at a large, old, dingy-looking house in the Rue de l'Université, once the handsome hotel of some "grand seigneur." Its various full-grown *étages* are now filled with artists, students, *littérateurs*. The *porte-cochère* is open; we drive into the open paved court, where carriages are already standing. Three flights of stairs lead to the *appartement* of Madame Gibbs; we are ushered into a nice little ante-

room, where an open stove or brazier, with its white marble top, diffuses a delicious warmth, in compensation for the starry, frozen bitterness without. Two smiling maidens take charge of the ladies' mantles, *cachemires*, *capotes*, and all the rich winter wrappings that hide till then the still prettier winter dress below. The light chorus of voices from inside reaches the antechamber where we stand, and in a few moments we are among them.

Madame Gibbs had just recommenced her weekly *soirées*. These were of a kind very frequent among the lettered, artistic, professional, and generally not too rich nor exclusively fashionable circles in Paris; consequently very mixed, easy, and agreeable. There was no show, expense, or elaborate hospitality of any kind; the majority of the guests, having long been in the habit of attending, were as much at home there as by their own firesides. Besides this regular and natural *réunion* of intimates, Madame Gibbs, being a brisk and vigorous society-lover, was at some pains to flavor it with a spicy ingredient or two—a new arrival, a foreign celebrity, a queer character, a known talker, who either became permanently added to her set, or just lighted it up for the winter, or perhaps only the evening, like a

passing meteor. As yet the season for gayeties, for balls and *fêtes*, had not begun, the full flood of strangers had not poured in; therefore these *soirées* had more of a quiet, domestic character; the parqueted dancing-room was not yet used, except perhaps *impromptu*. The ladies' dresses were only demi-toilets; the young ones rejoiced still in their fresh, clear colors—pink, and white, and blue—unfaded by a long Paris campaign; there were plenty of happy, idle men, the Chamber of Deputies not having yet opened, nor the college lectures begun.

The rooms, though not large, were pretty well arranged for reception, well furnished, and well lighted. They consisted of two salons, just of the right sociable size and shape, each warm and cheerful, with a sparkling wood fire in each, and couches and *fauteuils* scattered around in most inviting groups.

The rooms are gradually filling, but the full choir of conversation is not begun. People stand, flit about unfixedly, exchange a word here and there; presently those who wish to meet find each other out, choose their places, and slip into a happy groove of talk, either in a duet or a group of three or four, changing as people leave or join it. Ere long the sa-

lon seems to present nothing but a crowd of black-bearded, mustached men, and of white gloves waving eagerly through the room, with tongues incessantly going between talk and laughter. All are voluble, easy, self-possessed, and seem in high enjoyment, except here and there arises an insular form like a column above the rest, blonde-headed, reddish-whiskered, good-looking, heavy — either silent or speaking quietly, perhaps with an air of *gêne*, and with looks and attitudes any thing but at ease. "English!" say I to myself at once. Besides these, there are bearded artists, professors with *lorgnons*, a few *militaires*, some serious-looking Italian exiles, some half-unnationalized travellers, citizens of all worlds, and many of them queer ones; some suspected Jesuits, with smooth smiles, softly joining every lively group of talkers, listening and seeming as lively as any. Here and there is a stray grand seigneur of the old school, known by his more quiet and polished manners, generally a zealous Catholic, *dévot* perhaps without morality, and a chivalrous Legitimist, doomed thus to elbow Red Republicans of the most emancipated type. Finally, as large an element as any are English girls; often *habituées* of Paris, but English all over in look, speech, and dress;

and, in their fresh beauty and joyous simplicity, great favorites with these *causerie*-loving gentlemen. French demoiselles make a very thin sprinkling, and, when they do appear, it must be owned their countrymen neglect them a little.

There sits a knot of downright English maidens—a bouquet of two or three of these Northern lilies or island roses—and every now and then a sprightly-looking Frenchman slides up to them, hat in hand, and, with a smile, makes a couple of bows — the first at a distance, reverential; the second nearer, *empressé* (for, however intimate, hands are seldom shaken); and, after a most polite inquiry as to the health of the young lady he has singled out, which must be answered, as he will repeat it till it is, he opens at once an animated flirtation. The mixture of gay raillery with compliment only *implied*, the appearance of interest, the pretty turns of speech, showing just enough consciousness of their respective sexes, and not too much, the readiness to listen as well as talk, and the open-hearted, confiding frankness with which he communicates his feelings, his cares, or his sorrows — all this strikes the young English mind as very un-English indeed.

The favorite first topic is a laughing raillery of mademoiselle on her *préjugés atroces* against his nation, which he either playfully deprecates or exaggeratedly confirms; and meanwhile the English girl, if she be new and inexperienced, looks on the Frenchman with a mixture of doubt, suspicion, and curiosity; he is a mystery of which she finds the study far from disagreeable. Theoretically she has a horror of him as something wicked, worthless, dangerous; yet, while drawn on by him to express this, she finds her real, actual feelings to be surprise, amusement, and, above all, that delicious sense of gently gratified vanity. For the benefit of such-like innocent English girls, I may observe that this way of talking and style of manners is with a Frenchman a mere matter of course, and means very little indeed. Of course my initiation into French society was somewhat on this wise; but I missed a good many of the favorite personalities, from the fact of my not being precisely the *blonde et candide Anglaise* which is stereotyped in their imagination. Yet, though I was not in person of the peculiar English *type* (to use their pet phrase), I soon discovered that I was to them most abundantly *britannique* in character and *manière d'être*. I could after a while perceive,

not indistinctly, that I was somewhat of a favorite; but I owed this chiefly to Sibyl's extreme popularity. There would come up to me one Frenchman after another, either led by Madame Gibbs or by the strong spirit within, to inquire in tender tones if I was not *la sœur de cette charmante Madame de Fleury;* and very good they were to endure all my sins of grammar and absurdities of pronunciation for her sake.

So I sat and watched, when I could, Sibyl's delicate gayety in her light passages of talk with divers kinds of people, her pretty caressing attentions to her female friends, her manners so carelessly serene to the gentlemen, young and old, who hovered round her. I had, as I said, my share of introductions—for sometimes it was a quick desultory succession of indifferent persons. I scarcely caught a name; I hardly knew one face from another; all was equally strange — an Englishman often wild and bearded like a foreigner, a foreigner sometimes speaking excellent English.

Before long there came up to Sibyl a young man, who at once detached himself, to my eyes, from that crowd of men, all so like one another, and whom she named as M. Émile. He had decidedly a military air; but the first

thing that struck me was his superiority in height, figure, carriage, and style of face to almost all the other young men. He was from the north-east of France, and a tinge of Frankish blood may have modified his Celtic lineaments. There was in them an indefinable charm far beyond handsomeness, for he was not handsome. But the changing play of his mobile features, his fresh coloring, the rich chestnut of his hair and silky mustache, made him certainly not ugly. He approached Sibyl quietly, with an air of homage almost timid, yet very sweet; then, on being introduced, bowed and addressed me with a kind of gentle formality; but there was never any *gaucherie*. A Frenchman presents himself well, and stands or sits straight and at rest—all but his gesticulating hands; his bow and smile bespeak one who knows he can sustain his part. In the case of M. Émile, the gentleness with which he entered into conversation formed a kind of shelter from the exuberant and even noisy vivacity of the others; and I soon found myself pleasantly floating along a stream of metaphysical, critical, sentimental, and other discourse with the young soldier. He talked well, like most other Frenchmen; but, though his smile was ready and sweet, and his re-

marks often playful, he yet seemed to me subdued in comparison with the others, so I took occasion of a break in our conversation to ask my sister if the young officer's heart had been blighted..

"No, I think not," said Sibyl. "The state of his country and his own want of hope of rising tend to depress him; but you will often find him lively enough."

This was sufficient, when M. Émile, with his own quiet perseverance, again found a place by Sibyl and me, to make me begin to talk politics. I asked him how he liked his present ruler. He shrugged his shoulders *à la Française.* "You think him only better than anarchy?" I persisted, with English directness.

"I am in his service; I must not speak ill of him."

I begged pardon for my indiscreet question, and was politely forgiven. Indeed, a dogged reserve was not in M. Émile's character, at least towards one in whom he began to place a friendly confidence; and he ere long betrayed feelings which made me say, "I am charmed to find you really a Republican."

"You are the first that ever doubted it," replied he, in a gentle, injured tone.

Still farther emboldened, I affirmed, "If I

were in your place I should throw my *brevet* to the four winds."

He appreciated the sentiment, but pleaded the necessity of a profession, the chance and hope of serving his country in some way or other, which a present surrender of his position would forever destroy, alleging reasons which I felt to be valid, but would not allow. I stood to my text, affirmed with easy heroism, "Il n'est pas nécessaire de vivre," and so on, till he was reduced to a smiling protesting, "Mais vraiment, mademoiselle;" then broke off, wondering at such "enthousiasme exalté;" he had no idea he should find an *Anglaise* so democratic, etc. I liked to see him as he stood smiling down from his tall height, under his dark silken mustache—a pleased, amused, half-embarrassed smile—crossing and uncrossing his arms in a light and gentle style of his own, as he entered his protest against my *exaltation.*

Though liking him, I was a little displeased with M. Émile for what appeared an absence of heroic consistency, a temporizing submission to circumstances; but I did him wrong.

It was perhaps fortunate for our nascent friendship that at this juncture there approached a gentleman whom I did not know, a complete contrast to the quiet, thoughtful, low-

voiced young officer. This person had been fluttering about, or rather had poised in his erratic flight a moment near us, and then, waiting for no introduction, plunged into the conversation, which from that moment he seized up, carried on, and almost engrossed, with a torrent of *esprit*, fun, laughter, and animation of look, tone, and gesture that I despair of describing. To say that he was amusing is little; I was never in my life so amused before. To say that he was extremely noisy is also strict justice; and when, attracted by the flood of talk and outbreaks of laughter from our group, other gentlemen from time to time joined in, till it consisted of five, six, or even seven at once, contributing their quota to the excitement, I felt myself at last in a bewildering fever of amusement, surprise, and exertion.

Sibyl at first gave me some aid, but she was called away by Madame Gibbs, and, left to myself, I, unfortunate foreigner! found my difficulty in speaking become ten times greater. But this mattered nothing; the flattering politeness, the inexhaustible brilliancy, and the electrical good-humor of the unknown, covered and overpowered all encircled by these vehement talkers. I could not and did not think of escaping, and nothing but my own final de-

parture put an end to the game, which seemed so agreeable to these gentlemen, of astonishing the poor *Anglaise.* I must say that they were extremely well bred, and the quickness and courtesy with which the brilliant stranger listened to, understood, helped out, and replied to my very English French were perfectly charming.

As for recording one tenth of what he said, it would be impossible, nor, without the tone and manner, would it seem much worth recording; I can only collect some few stray drops from this Niagara of talk. I was at first (of course) rallied on my supposed prejudices against the French, and confirmed in them by the assurance that they were *bavards*, frivolous, foolish, and unreflective. Nothing could be more amusing than the way they ran themselves down, appealing constantly, in seductive tones, to "mademoiselle," for whose edification these *tirades* were uttered. They talked about national cruelty; their ferocity, especially that of the military, was admitted without a dissentient voice; but some one pronounced the cruelties of the English worse, because they were committed in cold blood, while the French were hurried away by passionate excitement. Finally, of all the excesses of all the most sav-

age soldiery, those committed by the Austrians were said to be pre-eminent.

Then the gentle M. Émile was rallied on the ferocity he had brought from one short campaign in Algérie; but, to allay the horror I might be entertaining of him, I was assured that he was the most humane of all, and that he had not "égorgé plus d'une douzaine de femmes, ni mangé plus de quatre enfants." M. Émile then told composedly some stories of murderous adventure and horrible massacre in Algérie; but when he tried to allay the effect by some touches of interesting incident or picturesque description, he was unmercifully laughed at by his friend, who bade me believe nothing he said, for that "M. l'officier" was "romanesque, un peu sentimental même." "A defect from which you are quite free," I thought to myself. It was great fun to see this lively man teasing his friend, and then consoling him with a patronizing, caressing good-nature which the tall young *militaire* took with his usual quiet serenity. From foreign, they came to domestic cruelties, which they told apparently with great gusto. "Voilà, mademoiselle, encore le tigre!" was the delighted wind-up.

Having thus lighted on politics, we pursued

the theme with something more of earnestness than before; and then my new friend, by certain oratorical *poses*, betrayed himself as one accustomed to the tribune and to public speaking. All Frenchmen, I observe, who are in the habit of this make a point, when interrupted for but two minutes, of following Lamartine's celebrated example, and standing with their arms folded in an attitude of august calm. My friend's natural majesty was not much, but he did what he could. A pensive Italian joined the group; the sprightly professor—for so far I had made out what he was —instantly turned his fire of raillery on him, said something with much emphasis about "le roi Bomba," and then, turning again to me, observed, "We have one comfort left; as long as the Neapolitans exist we can not be called the last of nations"—which hit the grave young democratical *littérateur* took very well.

Then he gayly quoted the president's late-reported saying, "Il faut supprimer l'Angleterre," and asked me how I liked it. "Let him try!" I answered, scornfully, adding that it was very ungrateful of Louis Napoleon to the country which had sheltered him so long. This remark was politely approved of, and when I was threatened with being detained

prisoner at Paris in case of an English war, and answered "Je resterai volontiers," smiles and bows acknowledged *my* reciprocal politeness. When, on being asked my political opinions, I confessed to the reddest of Red Republicanism, adding "that I was ready to mount a barricade," M. le Professeur, with an air of chivalrous devotion, declared his determination to mount behind me. A general shout of laughter informed him of his mistake, and it was in vain that he earnestly strove to improve it; he got nothing but the credit of his first assertion.

In the midst of the discussion my sister came to call me away. She was attended by a new Frenchman, whom she formally presented to me, naming each to each as she did so. My name seemed to interest the audience, for the French gentlemen suspended their storm of discourse to let the small soft Christian name in Sibyl's sweet accents slip in, and fill up the tiny interval. I bowed and vanished, the last-named gentleman accompanying Sibyl and me to our carriage.

And who, then, was this clever, impetuous talker, who had given me my first idea of French *esprit?* Why, he was the man most *recherché* in all that society; still young, but

known as a charming talker, and a brilliant, rising man of letters—the pleasant and popular Professor Achille Lamourette. After-acquaintance presented him in new lights; at present I rightly held him intensely agreeable. In appearance he was far more the Frenchman of one's imagination than M. Émile or any one else that I had seen—a lithe figure, electric movements, a whirlwind of gesticulation, an eye of restless light, smooth chin and slight mustache, features young but expression old, a face of lightning-like play, but strongly marked with those sensitive lines that betray a most nervous temperament, and speak also of days of sedentary, studious toil, a mercurial nature bowed down to drudgery, but always striving to escape, and compensating itself by brief, eager flashes of more vivid life.

I have said that there were few French ladies present; nevertheless, I did make acquaintance with one whom I think I shall like better than Hermine. In the first place, she had expressed a great desire to know English young ladies; in the next, though she sat by her mother's side, she was not totally eclipsed in the maternal shadow, but spoke for herself in a decided manner, as one accustomed to some independence. It is true she was about

twenty-three. At first I thought her older, for her face was one of those which at first sight are dingy and heavy, but when animated, lighted up, and especially in full dress and at happy moments, become really beautiful. It was a grand, melancholy face, with severe Roman features, ample brow, and large black eyes; there were in it traces of physical, and I thought suppressed mental, suffering. Her whole manner had a gracious self-respect, bespeaking her, what I believe she was, an honest, high-principled girl.

She was Eulalie Rénand, daughter of a wealthy Protestant banker. She had been carefully brought up, was well-informed, and had much sense—of the dry, positive kind, perhaps, and attended by sufficient confidence in herself; but she thought clearly, and spoke readily and well. She paid me some stately and gracious compliments on my poor French, expressed a desire of farther acquaintance, and a willingness to give me any information I might wish for. We fell into conversation, which turned by chance on the early marriages of French girls, about which I asked her many questions. She confirmed all my previous ideas, but added, with a proud calm, "There are exceptions; I am one, and I do not regret

it." I afterwards learned that she had formed and kept the romantic resolution never to marry unless she could do it *à l'Anglaise*—that is, for love.

But all this while I have said nothing of Hermine. Well, there was nothing to say. She sat at her mother's side, demure, like a kitten that may be playing madly next moment. She looked quite a child, and a very pretty one, though dressed in a quiet-colored silk morning-dress. Gentlemen came up to her mother, but addressed not a word to her; which was all exquisitely correct, of course. While watching her I saw her suddenly become ten times demurer; the only reason I could assign for this was the approach of an elderly gentleman, the same who was last presented to me, and who escorted us home, Hermine and her mother accompanying us. He was a specimen of a very different class from most of those around us, and in three points he certainly had the advantage. He used no furious gesticulations; he had no fierce, disorderly profusion of hair over lips and chin; and he did not breathe garlic and tobacco. He was, in fact, a rather elderly aristocrat, and of manners as aristocratically perfect as any I ever saw — not particularly sincere, nor con-

veying any idea of genuine amiability, but simple, yet finished, easy, and agreeable. I honored what I saw as a last relic of what I am told is dying out in Paris—the manners of the *ancien régime*. A tranquil bow, a low even tone, and an immediate but very quiet flow of conversation—conversation, it must be owned, much in the same style as his younger rivals —that is, seasoned with compliments, raillery, and all the implements from the arsenals of flirtation which he may have used with success some twenty years ago, more, as I thought, to keep up still a character for *galanterie* than from any other feeling. I rather wished he had not that twinkling gray eye, nor that somewhat slippery smile. Still, I would have attentively studied this new zoological specimen; but I was so very, very—tired, was it? —and I was greatly relieved when, after bowing to me, and gracefully kissing Sibyl's and Hermine's hands, Monsieur le Comte took his leave.

"Well," said Sibyl, laughing at my exhausted expression of countenance, "these *soirées* present a new tableau every time; but the best of all was to-night. You, the shy, rustic English girl, who can't speak a word of French, chattering away the whole evening with half a

dozen of the most colloquial Frenchmen, and looking the most desperately amused of them all! Tell me, now, what do you think of them?"

"They are very amusing," I said, succinctly.

"Yes," put in Hermine, with a slight laugh; "and still more so, I should think, if you take for granted all that my countrymen say to you. They take a little advantage of you as a foreigner, just *pour s'amuser*."

"I think that very likely," I replied, though at the moment I was at loss for the particular allusion and the meaning of that slight tone of pique. I presently remembered that M. le Comte had, in a paroxysm of politeness, informed me that the very name *Anglaise* had to a Frenchman a mysterious charm, a spell, calling up an image of ideal perfection. This, no doubt, was provoking to a young *Française* quite conscious of *her* charms. When Sibyl soon after enlightened me still farther by the private information that an alliance was on the tapis between M. le Comte and Mdlle. Hermine, and that in a short time they would probably be declared *fiancés*, I comprehended better still.

Left alone, my sister and I fell into the usual English strain of comment on the French

marriage system, and wondered at, deplored, and abused it in general, while I grieved over Hermine's case in particular, though assured by Sibyl that Hermine would not be unhappy, as she had never expected any thing better. It was strange to have thus early before my eyes a veritable, living instance of those *mariages de convenance* which I had always heard of, but never quite realized. Here was a girl like myself—with a heart, I supposed, made by nature like mine, and, I was sure, charms enough to have a right to love and be loved, if any of us had — affianced, without any will of her own, to a man nearly twice her age.

I looked on the bright, graceful little nymph with a new, painful interest, unable to regard her as other than a victim. Seeing my compassion still troublesome, Sibyl was at pains to say all she could for the system, which, as she observed, suits French people, and has some pleasant features in it. The romance of love-making, which with us ends, with them often begins, at marriage. The husband naturally conceives a great interest in the young, timid, innocent creature thus confided to him, and takes pains, by tender attentions, to tame the shy, wild bird, conquer her fears, and win her heart. Often he succeeds; she loves for the

first time warmly, and then, as often, Sibyl was forced to confess, the love-making ceases. But the wife adapts herself by degrees to the change.

"I think," said Sibyl, "Hermine will do as well as most under the circumstances. She has great good temper and good sense, and she is such a taking little creature that if she chooses she may hold her husband captive a long time."

I was silent, but my heart rebelled; I was only eighteen, and I, an honest-hearted English girl, believed in love.

We soon returned to considering the characters and incidents of the evening just past: Sibyl was of great use in helping me to arrange my impressions, in making annotations and explanations.

"Compared with this," I said, "what a commonplace affair is an English evening party! How little of manners, still less of character, one would observe there! What salient features, what strongly-marked individuality, what dramatic grouping of persons and situations! I came desiring only a niche whence I might see and hear something as to what a Frenchman and his talk might be like, and I find myself undergoing a full initiation, seasoned by a

curious contradictory charm—the piquancy of utter strangeness and the ease of long familiarity."

I expressed also my surprise at their social imprudence and unreserve, the freedom of their strictures on others, their openness about themselves, and their apparent pleasure in an answering sincerity.

"My dear," said Sibyl, "Hermine is partly right in saying that you must not take *au pied de la lettre* all that you hear. Frenchmen are such an odd compound—they have such varied motives for what they say: a desire to please the foreigner, and a love of strong emotions and strong language makes them find fault with themselves, while their *amour-propre* and quick sense of ridicule causes them to be severe towards others. Having discovered your English truthfulness, they are much amused at it—in an imaginative way; attracted too. But in the long run, *ma petite*, you will find yourself beaten."

"Very likely," I said; "I feel that I am no match for them."

But in my heart I vowed boldly and gayly that I *would* be a match for them; that I too would be only observant and amused; that I would be charmed but for the moment, and no

more; that I would fight the charming Frenchmen cheerfully with their own weapons, and return with vivid content to my own honest English home and English brothers—lovers I had none.

"Even I," continued Sibyl, "who have known France so much longer, and whom you think so French, even I think sometimes what chance have I, or the simple downright English nature, against this delicate subtlety, this *persiflant* criticism and deep *arrière-pensée.* They see through us, flatter us, charm us, and then laugh at and forget us—looking so open and innocent through it all!"

"Do you include M. Émile among them?" I asked.

"No," Sibyl answered, rather hurriedly. "Émile's nature is so golden, I think he may be relied on. Good-night, my child."

And so we went to bed.

CHAPTER II.

THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

THE week that elapsed between my first and second *soirées* at Madame Gibbs's had some significance for France, if not for myself. It was marked, in fact, by a revolution.

One night Paris went to sleep a free and tranquil city, with all her plans and purposes, whether of pleasure or politics, in full flow, and waked to find herself gagged, invested, breathless, and motionless. An armed force, conjured up, as it seemed, like a night enchantment, beautiful-seeming, still and strong, filled up the city from end to end, girdled every square, closed up every street — all Paris at once compressed in one gigantic hand, that kept down every breast, restrained every movement; and behind that glittering fence of bayonets one man doing what he pleased with a dumb, prostrate population! Between night and morning a constitution had been stabbed dead—a nation's liberties strangled.

But I must tell the story as we learned it, beginning with a piece of our own domestic

history. Just before this our circle had been enlarged by the advent of our cousin Horace, a very grave, good, middle-aged man. He took a room in the same house with us, and proved a most useful protector and chaperon in the following days of excitement.

On the morning of Tuesday, December 2, Horace came in from his early morning walk with the news that the Champs Élysées up to the Place de la Concorde was full of soldiers —five hundred lancers coming in in full trot —and that it was reported that Changarnier was that morning arrested. Between nine and ten we went out and learned something more definite. We passed through the Champs Élysées, and saw Place, quays, avenues crammed with dragoons, leading their horses about among the trees, and evidently preparing for a permanent station there. In the Faubourg St. Honoré we found people busy pasting up three proclamations—one from the préfet de police, two from the president himself—of which the first was short, giving in a few brief decisive sentences the facts of the case—that the National Assembly was dissolved, universal suffrage established, the French people convoked to vote from the 14th to the 21st following, the Council of State dissolved, and all Paris

and the environs in a state of siege. The second *appel au peuple* was couched in that peculiar style of eloquence that seems so pleasing to French minds, denouncing the Assembly just dismissed as a *foyer de complots*, and calling on the people to assist him—the prince-president—in forming a new government, of which the chief points are a *chef responsable* named for ten years (who, he not obscurely hints, is to be himself), and two assemblies, the one deliberative, the other legislative, and both elected by universal suffrage. This he says was the First Consul's system—this only can save France.

The préfet's proclamation conjured the "habitants de Paris" to confide in the man whom six millions of votes had made their head, glorified the "grandeur de l'acte" he had just performed, and the "calme imposant et solennel" of which he set them an example, identified him with the people, and submitted his conduct to their judgment.

At intervals along the street were posted triple rows of soldiers of the line; the *porte-cochère* of the Élysée was open, and we saw in the court staff-officers mounted and a great deal of movement to and fro. As we approached the Place de la Madeleine more and more signs of military occupation appeared, soldiers

in deeper masses, with bayonets fixed, and the Place all round the well-known church filled with lancers, with their lances and waving pennons displayed, immovable on their horses. Presently cries of "Vive le général!" arose, and we saw a man in general's uniform, on a beautiful white horse, followed by officers, ride by and take off his cocked hat to the salute of the troops. He was a stout, square man, with white mustaches, and a face of rather fierce energy and resolution. It was General Saint-Arnaud, the minister of war.

The crowd increased, but there was no agitation anywhere. Paris seemed to take coolly enough the midnight trick that had been played upon her, and stood reading with faint amusement the placards on the walls that told her her freedom had been destroyed. While we were thus engaged, a young mustached French gentleman (a stranger) addressed us with great politeness, to assure us that "tout était fini," that there was no danger; and, on our making some inquiry about the expected review in the Champs Elysées, added, "Allez voir, allez voir; les dames anglaises aiment à tout voir"—and laughing, with a low bow, he left us. By his cheerfulness we concluded that he was a "Napoléoniste." Even the sol-

diers laughed and said something encouraging to us as we passed, but with perfect respect. Good-humor seemed the order of the day. At the Palais Royal, one of the courts was full of soldiers, peaceably cutting up big loaves and undeniably fraternizing with the people, at least as far as laughter, jokes, and a constant hand-shaking going on through the railings.

Growing timid, we went home through quiet by-streets; but in the afternoon, having the company of two friends, curiosity prevailed, and we went out again. On the Boulevards we found a deep, dense crowd, especially before all the great cafés, political clubs, etc., a crowd such as I had never seen in Paris before. Round Tortoni's there was a perfect mass, knots of eager politicians of all classes and in all states of mind; wild excitement burning in those dark, bearded faces, fiery eyes, fierce, rapid gesticulation. Impetuous harangues were poured out by some popular orator, to whom the others listened as to an oracle. Oh, what strange groups I saw! what various types of excited faces! Several other ladies were passing, but all curiosity, all interest, seemed confined to us English; French-women moved on rapidly, with *ennuyé* looks; they had had enough of revolutions.

The "Patrie," Louis Napoleon's especial paper, was being noisily sold and eagerly bought at every step; we got one. A new proclamation had appeared, an address of the president's to the army, with whom he identified himself as the only upholders of the law and guardians of public liberty, bade them vote freely (for him) as citizens, but obey him unconditionally as soldiers. He desired them, of course, to maintain a "calm and imposing attitude," reminded them of their former wrongs from the people, how they had been "vaincus" and their "désintéressement héroïque flétri" by calumny, and now "he wills that the army shall make itself heard."

A report spread that the immense division of cavalry stationed in the Champs Élysées was preparing for movement, drums beating, dragoons mounting. We flew thither in time to behold a splendid spectacle; all these regiments, seven or eight hundred in number, were mounted and in movement all down that long space from the Barrière to the Place de la Concorde. The eye was filled with a multitudinous unity of splendid forms, a slow-moving picture, varying, yet compact. Far as one could see those long avenues were one shining mass of helmets and cuirasses and sword-belts,

which flashed back the sun as from brilliant mirrors, with a sea of scarlet plumes above, and below a gay confusion of red and azure. There they were in three divisions, cuirassiers, carabineers, and dragoons, filling up the middle of that wide space to the extent of nearly two miles, ten or twelve abreast, moving on with the slow, regular tramp of their horses' feet, or wheeling all at once lightly, quickly, and noiselessly round, at the word of command given by some splendid aid-de-camp as he dashed alongside the glittering file, while drums and trumpets and bugles rang from the band which occupied the centre with their white horses, plumes, and sword-belts.

Ere long appeared the president; he was received (of course) with shouts, and rode several times up and down alongside the troops at a swift gallop, with a brilliant staff saluting as they cheered; they then slowly defiled off, to the sound of drums and trumpets, till the long, long succession of gorgeous figures had disappeared. It was, though nobody knew this, the president's last public appearance for a long while; between this day of safety, ere the revolutionary storm had arisen, and the one when it had sunk to rest with all the wrecks and ruins it had made, he remained hidden in well-guarded security.

This magnificent military spectacle I heard described by Sibyl, but I individually lost it. Before we entered the Champs Élysées, I had become so tired with over-excitement, that I chose indiscreetly to go home by myself — a much more difficult affair than we had reckoned on, and I was dreadfully frightened. Almost every public thoroughfare was closed, crowds of people were being forced back by the soldiers, and, as I went along the Rue St. Honoré, I was four times stopped by *cordons* of soldiers with an "Où allez-vous, madame?" The answer "Chez moi" passed me twice; the third time, after some hesitation and an additional supplication, I was again allowed to pass; but the fourth I was repelled by bayonets fixed and presented, and firm, though civil, refusal. So I put myself under the protection of an old woman near. She too had been turned back, and was crying with fright, weariness, and hunger, and she had been out all day. Nothing could exceed her amazement at a *demoiselle* being out alone at such a time; but we held together, and at last, to our mutual thankfulness, got home by a sideway.

The history of the Coup d'État has been told by many. I, a girl, shall tell only what I saw with my own eyes — without comment, too,

which is safest; for, though I was a girl, I felt like a woman—say rather a man. As I had told M. Émile, I was the fiercest of Republicans.

We went out early on Wednesday morning to see another review, as we expected, from the number of soldiers filling the Champs Élysées, a grand scene like that of yesterday. The cavalry were dismounted, and evidently getting themselves and their horses ready for inspection. The horses stood somewhat irregularly about in the road, their gay housings on; but they themselves were busy eating the hay brought from the great carts that stood all round. The men, some leading their horses about, some feeding them, stood some loitering about, or getting their uniforms in order, as was need, for their great boots were splashed, and they themselves looked cold and jaded, but inexhaustibly good-humored. There were, as before, thousands of carabineers, cuirassiers, and dragoons, whose shining armor and gay colors, in the shifting picturesque confusion of their varied movements through all that far-extending line, made a most captivating sight.

Desirous not to waste our morning, we addressed a good-humored-looking young cuirassier who sat idle on a bench by the way-side, and asked him if the president was to appear,

and when. "In about an hour," he said. So we determined to walk as far as the Place de la Concorde, and by the time we were back we calculated that we might see him riding, with all his staff, down that long Avenue de Marigny.

As we walked on, the place had more and more the appearance of a bivouac. The troops had evidently spent the night there; all about the Cirque and Franconi's were the soldiers' little bundles neatly done up, bayonets stacked, bolsters, tin canisters, all most carefully arranged. Stalls containing loaves and bottles of wine took the place of the usual stalls of fruit and confectionery; and in and out among the soldiers ran the smart *vivandières*, distributing food from the little green-covered carts by the way-side, or wine from the cafés. They were charming little figures in their fanciful costume of black round hat and feather, or perhaps a braided military cap, with the feminine addition of streaming bright ribbons, and abundance of fancifully plaited or ringleted hair, black short petticoat, almost a military frock, tight red trowsers, and sword by the side. But trim as were their figures, their faces were not very young, or at all events not very fresh; they looked somewhat weather-

beaten and soldier-like. But I liked their gay, frank expression; and heard with pleasure that they mostly bear good characters, and are treated with great respect by the soldiers.

Still the horses continued eating the hay which was scattered all over the ground; the soldiers still smoked, chatted, danced the polka in their great splashed boots, to keep themselves warm; for, after a drizzling night, it was a raw, chilly morning, and, though nearly two hours had elapsed, things were no way advanced. As we walked slowly home, the same young cuirassier came up and apologized with great politeness for having misled us about the president's appearance. "But," said he, "we know no more than any one else; we are waiting like you; and it is not very amusing either," he added, with a good-humored laugh.

I asked him where he had spent the night. "Ici sur la terre," he said, pointing downward, "with that above us," pointing to the sky, and cheerfully owned to being much fatigued. He was a herculean young fellow, with a black beard and mustache, through which his voice came with a mild gruffness; and, but that he continued smoking while "mesdames" talked with him, he had very good manners. He

was, too, a splendid figure, in the high brazen helmet and crest, the bright cuirass and white sword-belt, with all the gold tagging and trapping, which much increased his size. He asked us if we were not acquainted with the president, and said, laughingly, "He is not much to look at: très-petit, comme ça," holding his hand a moderate way above the ground, with a smile that seemed conscious of his own large proportions; "no taller than you, madame; blond—pas beau. Not like his uncle."

At last the vast force was in motion; the men mounted, and all moved up and down; but the president came not; and we observed that they all looked jaded and spiritless; their fine, handsome faces had a sulky expression, and they scarcely sat upright on their horses. Presently we were joined by an acquaintance — a little, sprightly, brown-faced, gray-mustached man, of French family but English bringing up, and in the English army. He told us that there was fighting going on in the Faubourg St. Antoine, that barricades were up, and that two deputies who were leading the people had been shot; and that there were orders given to shoot any deputy who might be in any way concerned with the rising. All the line consequently were there; fresh regi-

ments were constantly pouring into Paris, and there were now about 100,000 soldiers within the walls. It was dreadful to contrast this mere glittering show of war drawn up here in all its imposing pageantry, and the peaceable, idle, careless spectators merely staring as they passed, with the hot, bloody work, the wild and wicked passions that, if the report were true, were then foaming forth at the other end of Paris.

As we returned home with our friend, he said, pointing to the cavalry, who still performed the farce of riding up and down, "Look at those gay fellows; you would not think that in '48 there was just such a force assembled here, whom we saw in the course of the day lying about in heaps, dead and wounded, on the pavement, or carried into the shops and private houses, streaming with blood." By way of a contrast, as we passed a gay café in the Avenue, with its "Commerce de Vins" conspicuous at the top, its walls painted in red panelling, and its muslin-curtained glass door, we saw three officers of the carabineers dismounted and proceeding towards the house. They turned round to look at us, and we recognized among them our polite young friend of the morning. All were cornets, as we knew

from the one epaulette on the right shoulder, and very smart they looked, with their polished spurs, and swords swinging in their embroidered belts. All, too, were in high spirits, and very frolicsome, especially one fat gentleman of thirty and upwards, who cut *pirouettes* with great agility, evidently to show off before us, giving each other the *pas* as they entered the open door with grotesque politeness, and evidently intent on getting extremely tipsy by way of wiling away the dull hours of duty.

I asked where the president was all this time—was he at the scene of conflict? "Oh no," I was answered; "he's safe enough at the Élysée; *he'll* not come out to-day, depend on it." This proved true, and for many days afterwards. In fact, he took care through all that week to shroud himself in obscurity; he never slept at the Élysée, though the appearance of his being there was kept up. It is believed that he never spent two nights in the same place. There was, no doubt, mortal terror within those palace walls; the army was strongly suspected of a disposition to fraternize with the people, on whom it was thought they would assuredly not fire; and there was certainly in the soldiers a good-humored, indifferent bearing, as well as in the people an ab-

sence of alarm or antipathy which did not look like much danger of a collision between them.

Events thickened; but I tell them only as they affected us. One evening we walked on to the Faubourg St. Germain, to pay a visit to a lady—a Republican—whom we found in a state of furious fermentation, burning with grief, rage, disgust, and yet a grim satisfaction at the state of things, as too bad to last, and fixing her whole soul on the hope of a steady, organized, legal resistance.

She had just been, she said, to see the wife of a deputy, and found her and her husband in a state of frantic joy. The husband said, "I suppose you are come to congratulate us; I'm just out of prison." He had, in fact, been one of the two hundred deputies who were arrested in the *mairie* of the Rue Grenelle, where they had decreed the *déchéance* of the president.

They had just got the decree registered, when the Chasseurs de Vincennes surrounded the house and arrested them. From six in the morning till ten o'clock at night did that poor wife (like many others, no doubt) wait for her husband's return, without receiving a word of news; and then she went forth to

seek him. She was a timid, delicate woman, who had always been most carefully guarded and cherished; yet, when asked how she dared run such a risk, she had said, "No, I feared nothing. If stopped, I should have said I was the wife of an imprisoned deputy, and called on all true Frenchmen to assist me; and I believe they would." At length she was directed to the cavalry barracks at the Quai d'Orsai, where the prisoners had been temporarily conveyed, and just caught a glimpse of her husband. Next day nearly all were set free: satisfied with having recorded their protest, they did nothing more. Though in words ten times more the president's enemies than ever, *they* were not on the barricades, nor among the victims shot or *déportés.* Louis Napoleon's calculations, it appears, were right.

While we were talking, our friend's husband came in, and reported that there was fighting about the Hotel de Ville, thirty-thousand insurgents were intrenched behind the hotel, blockaded by the cavalry, and the Place de Grève was full of artillery. He said the people appeared to be rising to an extent which reminded him more of the insurrection in 1830 than of any *émeute* since, but what the issue would be no one could know. Both the calm,

sweet-natured husband and the passionate wife regarded this state of things as likely to lead to good; Louis Napoleon, they said, had now deeply and hopelessly compromised himself, and united against him all parties and all the leading men of the country. It was whispered that the army would not fight: if one of the generals — Cavaignac or Lamoricière — could but escape, and show himself to the troops, the matter would be settled in a day.

We were advised to go home by the smaller streets, which we were glad to do, as the Rues du Bac and de l'Université were evidently in an excited state; knots of people crowded the narrow *trottoir*, and shoals of *gamins* were moving in one direction. In the Champs Élysées we met our cousin, who gave us fearful tidings; the fighting was coming farther and farther west from the Faubourgs St. Antoine and St. Martin, where it had first begun: it had rolled up the Boulevards as far as the Rue Richelieu, where barricades had been thrown up. All the troops were gathered in that part of the town, cannonading and musketry going on fiercely—a complete and terrible struggle being acted out in the streets of Paris. Horace, as a true Englishman—Frenchmen know better than to thrust themselves as mere curi-

ous spectators into danger—had got as near the agitated parts as possible, till he was driven back by the lancers, who rode down without scruple all passers-by. The scene of conflict was chiefly in the Boulevard de Montmartre, whence he heard the repeated terrible volleys of musketry, and where the barricades were forming. Were the people in truth fighting or not? had there been, as was reported, shots fired from the windows?

In the evening my cousin left us for the reading-room, to ascertain what news the papers gave. Luckily it was close by, and in a safe quarter; and we were left in a nervous agitation, taking every loud slam of a *porte-cochère* down the street for distant cannon. Then came horses' hoofs down the Champs Élysées, and we learned that a detachment of dragoons had been dispatched to the scene of action. We sat still, and shuddered for all that was passing then.

Just as, about midnight, I was writing to my family in England that all was safe and quiet in our quarter, I was startled by sudden noises. We hurried to the balcony, and stood out in the dark night to watch in trembling suspense for their repetition — dreadful and hitherto unheard sounds—volleys of musketry

and discharges of cannon. How near they were we knew not; but the insurgent mass was evidently rolling on into the heart of the city, and it *might* be that the conflict was now raging round the Palais de l'Élysée itself. If, I thought, he who, there hidden in his luxurious abode, was throwing Paris into the horrors of civil war, were to be driven ignominiously thence, I could rejoice even in these terrible sounds.

Three discharges came one after another; then they stopped, in five or ten minutes to begin again; and this lasted about an hour. Again and again we ran into the balcony to listen; with a shuddering, sickening horror we looked into the dark, still town, pierced here and there with silent, shining gas-light, and heard booming on the midnight air that huge voice of deliberate, unpitying slaughter. They came in solemn discharges, like slow, separate syllables of death. I had heard cannon before, but never at night, never in the heart of a great city, and never as the voice of murder; and I prayed never to hear such sounds again.

In an hour, as I said, all was once more quiet; but it was long ere I slept; horrible images of bloodshed and death jostled each other in my brain.

Next day (Friday) told, more or less distinctly—for truth was hard to get at in those days of terror—the tale of Thursday, which I will here give, confirmed as it was by careful after-inquiry.*

The spirit of Paris had, as we have said, been stirred at last. All her hopes seemed to lie in the republican *bourgeoisie*, of whom the deputies belonging to the Mountain were the leaders. The *ouvriers*, attracted by the promise of universal suffrage, fancied Louis Napoleon's sovereignty to be for their interest, and would not stir for the classes above them, whom they hated. The most respectable members of their class stood aloof, dreading nothing so much as the *rouges*, and any popular agitation which might bring that now cowering and stifled element to the top, so vivid was their remembrance of the horrors of June, 1848, to which every one recurred as the climax of all evil. There was also the consideration, what had they to fight for? when they had overthrown the president, who was there to replace him? whom could they confide in?

* All this has now become matter of history. Still it seems well to give it—given, too, as history so seldom is—from the observation of an eye-witness, chronicled on the spot.—EDITOR.

what hope was there in the *Assemblée* or its knots of selfish, cowardly intriguers?

But the passionate energy of the Republican agitators began to excite others; from an early hour in the morning there were immense crowds in the ordinary places of meeting; and in the course of the day, as I said, masses of insurgents formed behind the Hotel de Ville. There was a tone of fear and vacillation in Louis Napoleon's proclamations; it was said that his heart was failing him. The army required working up to a certain pitch; their pay during these three days was doubled, and wine and food were distributed in abundance. The agitation went on; a *barricade monstre*, as the newspapers called it, recalling those of '48, arose in the Rue St. Denis; there was a stir in the wealthy and fashionable Boulevard de Montmartre and the Chaussée d'Antin, amidst a class not given to revolutionary movements.

The Government was quietly watching, even encouraging by secret agents who mixed among the crowd, and by strange, carefully-circulated rumors, the assemblages who were thus gradually presenting themselves for the important collision that was certainly desired; the troops were kept carefully withdrawn, looking on, and waiting till all was complete. At two o'clock

volleys of artillery were heard to proceed from the barricaded quarters; the *émeutiers* were in possession of the faubourg of St. Denis, which was evidently in sympathy with them. Those who defended the barricades were not, it is true, in number to oppose to any effect such masses of military; they were mostly young men of good *bourgeois* families, who, desperate with rage and shame at this public disgrace, were determined by this deliberate offer of their lives to kindle the whole population, if possible; if not, at any rate to fall in a last protest.

The troops advanced; the slender groups that had collected about the barricades were fired on. These were most gallantly defended, but after a more or less prolonged resistance all were taken, and by nine o'clock in the evening the desperate struggle was over. The heaps of dead were found to consist mainly of well-dressed young men, with gold chains and watches, and "yellow gloves," as the official reports contemptuously said; the workmen who were found mingled among them were classed as "malefactors." One young man, who fell towards the end of the contest, was M. Denis Dessoubs, described at first as a deputy, but who proved to be the brother of one,

a young "montagnard," then lying ill. Denis seized his brother's official scarf, and, thus personating him, rushed to the top of a barricade in the very face of the troops, and, unarmed and unprotected, addressed himself to the soldiers, crying, "Vive la République!" and adjuring them to join him.

The colonel, seeing his *exaltation*, and wishing to spare him, said, "Retire!" but the young man answered only, "Vive la République démocratique!" was fired at by the whole troop, and fell dead on the spot. These young men, whether wisely or not, at least sacrificed themselves to a noble object, and moreover they led others into no risk to which they did not expose themselves first of all. As for the soldiers, an office less *héroïque* (to use the word liberally bestowed on them by the Government) than that of shooting down their fellow-citizens can scarcely be imagined. Unfortunately, these were the men who had learned ferocity in Algeria; the Chasseurs de Vincennes were especially noted for that quality.

But something yet was needed, beyond what the necessary force for dispersing the insurgents called for—something to strike sudden, universal, crushing panic—and it was supplied. At three o'clock fearful discharges of artillery

were suddenly heard on the Boulevards Bonne Nouvelle, Montmartre, and des Italiens, where, as I have said, crowds were collected, but there were neither barricades nor insurgents. These sounds, heard in the western quarters shut out by masses of soldiery, had led to the erroneous belief that the fighting had extended to the Rue Richelieu. It was in reality a massacre. The reports that oozed out next day of soldiers firing on the unarmed crowds in the streets and into the houses, were regarded by the appalled hearers as too terrible for belief; and though even Government reports, with all their reserves and palliations, confirmed these tales, the whole horrible truth was long in becoming known to the world in general. But it *is* known now.

At three o'clock, then, the crowd on these Boulevards, separated only by a few steps from the soldiers, were absolutely inoffensive and peaceable—men, women, and children conversing among themselves or with the soldiers. All of a sudden a round of musketry is poured among them; they start, huddle together, fall back astonished, struck with fright at the sight of the corpses dropping around them; they endeavor to fly, discharge follows discharge, and in a minute the streets present

the appearance of a living crowd turned into heaps of dead and wounded. This was not all; the soldiers then fired into the balconies and windows of those stately houses, where well-dressed groups were standing; in many cases the balls penetrated into the rooms; the terror-struck inhabitants fled into the back rooms; discharges of cannon mingled with the artillery and battered the walls. Their fury increasing, though no resistance was offered, the soldiers in many cases rushed into the houses, and arrested, shot, or bayoneted the inhabitants.

This scene of carnage lasted for twenty minutes, when, at length, the firing was stopped and most of the troops retired; but the Boulevards remained in military occupation, and given up to a stupefaction of dismay. This impression quickly spread over the whole of Paris, and from that time resistance was no more.

Was there any immediate cause for this strange horror? Official accounts spoke in a vague and self-contradictory manner of a shot, some said several shots, fired from the windows of one or more of the handsomest houses upon the troops, for which this general attack on the unarmed throngs and the peaceable

houses was the retaliation. Eye-witnesses spoke of one or two stray shots heard in some unknown direction at the head of the column towards the Porte St. Denis, where the conflict was actually going on; this was the whole cause, or rather pretext, of the massacre. It was said, and believed, that many of the soldiers were intoxicated; it is certain that they had had double rations, and were in a very excited state.

Among the cases talked of at the time, with grief and pity, were that of an English apothecary, who was merely crossing a street near Tortoni's, and stopping to speak to an old man, when both were fired at and fell dead; of a librarian, who was shot sitting quietly with his family; of a child killed while playing in the street. Twenty-seven corpses were seen in a heap before the door of the splendid Hotel Sallandrouze. The official accounts contained an appalling list of persons, each "tué chez lui."

The Government lists of the slaughtered on this occasion varied considerably: from the final one given by the "Moniteur" the number would seem to have been about two hundred. But there is every reason to suppose that it was really far beyond this, though the

full amount of slaughter can never now be known. The brigades employed in this business were commanded by General Canrobert.

After this Louis Napoleon was called by himself and his admirers the "Saviour of Society."

Next day all was tranquil; it was the hush of terror. The Champs Élysées was comparatively empty of soldiers; there were a few scattered knots, the remainder of those who had bivouacked there; fires at which they were cooking their dinners were lighted here and there. Stacks of hay were on the pavement, the horses were drawn off and stationed among the trees; but along the other side of the quays were troops of lancers and carabineers.

Not a single lady was abroad, but numbers of idle men, especially workmen enjoying a holiday, and sauntering along with careless, insolent looks. Sibyl and I were much struck with the numbers of ill-looking persons out; one could almost tremble at these strange savages in blouses, with their small black caps, treading fiercely on, as if caring for nobody, with an intense unmoving stare in their eyes, as though dreaming of future murders. I never saw them without saying to myself, "These

are the men who, when revolution gets the upper hand, will one day drench Paris with blood." Never did I behold such a look of smothered hell-fire—so to speak—as there is in these French eyes.

Strangely, after all this, comes round the reception-night of Madame Gibbs. We had wished to go there to hear more on the absorbing subject of the day; but our *concierge* and servants strongly advised us against it, as there was no knowing what disturbances might spring up again. Ill-disposed persons, they said, were sure to assault people in a carriage, and took particular pleasure in dragging out the occupants—if ladies, sometimes with great violence—and using their vehicle to form the barricades. We could, no doubt, have found some gentleman to accompany and protect us; indeed, my grave English cousin was tranquilly ready for any act of fool-hardiness. But we did not think ourselves justified in exposing *them* to danger in order to protect us; so we curbed our wild feminine courage—as well as curiosity—and staid at home.

In the course of that day and the next we learned enough—only too much.

In spite of the reserve produced by alarm, grief and anxiety could not be quite suppress-

ed. There were many women among the lower classes whose husbands were out, and had not returned; our cook and dress-maker were among these.

A Greek gentleman of high character, whom we met occasionally, had himself heard the colonel of a regiment of chasseurs order his men to fire on any one who should obstruct their way in the streets, to his horror, for his own two boys were at a school at the end of it, and would be returning just as they passed. In spite of his entreaties, he was not permitted to go to them, but managed to send a message by a sergeant to bid the boys keep where they were till the streets were quiet. While he waited he saw planks being laid along the streets to soak up and hide the blood.

So all was quiet—and now came out a new proclamation. The prince-president congratulated Paris on the "fermeté et le dévouement inébranlables," whereby he and that brave army (always, he says, foremost in preserving order) had defended them from the attacks of a factious rabble, and restored all good citizens to peace and security. "Whatever became of *him*, the country was saved;" and he appeals to the army to shed no more French blood; if they did not wish for him they were to vote

against him—he would gladly retire; but in the mean time Paris had shown her unanimous devotion to him in the way she had combined to put down these partial and contemptible seditions.

I collected a heap of these proclamations as specimens of the style of address most persuasive to the French mind. One would scarcely have imagined a great, intelligent nation, and, above all, one keenly alive to ridicule, uniting to compose and accept such inflated, vain-glorious, self-contradictory productions as appeals to their reason and conscience, knowing, as all did, the source from which they emanated, and the motives betrayed at every turn by the actors. But all this, alas! seems nothing to the French; be the mask as transparent as it will, let actor and spectator alike know the farce they are performing, so long as the mask is worn, so long as the farce imitates something grand and heroic, they are satisfied. How long will a great nation contentedly sanction this glaring contradiction between profession and practice? and when will it cease to respond to intriguers, scape-graces, and imbeciles, who blazon themselves as heroes and men of genius?

And so the week was over, and all was over with Paris too—that is, she was quiet. Mur-

der had stilled her fierce, foaming streets; instead of the barricades were heaps of corpses; and she lay crouched at her master's feet, making him omnipotent by seeming to think him so.

Yes, the struggle was over, and we stood looking on at its ashes, wondering what had become of the burning anger of which we had heard so much: had a few false proclamations, a few discharges of musketry, dispersed it into thin air? Alas! it had flamed but in the hearts of a few ardent young men, and had been quenched in blood on those hopeless barricades, where they had stood passionate, though despairing, solitary marks in the face of the levelled muskets of a regiment, and had fallen, trying to kindle the people in a hopeless cause.

All was over; and—with us strangers—a dreary, scornful surprise began to take the place of the strong, sad emotions with which we had watched those three days, feeling such deep sympathy for a nation that apparently could not feel for itself.

On Sunday afternoon we ventured, under my cousin's escort, to visit the Boulevards, going as far as the original scene of conflict, the *quartiers* St. Denis and St. Martin, a walk of about five miles. The long, long boulevards

were one sea of heads; nothing else was to be seen into the far vista where they descend to the Porte St. Martin, and then again seem to mount and be lost in the air. The day after the conflict the pavement had still been soaked with blood; but all was now clean again, and the long line of beautiful houses, whose ground-floors were brilliant shops, and their upper stories the luxurious abodes of wealth, were setting forth, below, behind their wide plate-glass fronts, their glittering jewelry, lace, and silks, while above paper-stuffed windows or blank empty frames and bullet-dinted walls told the frightful tale of so few days ago.

It was strange with what lightness and vigor Paris

> "Opened forth for fresh display
> The elastic vanities of yesterday,"

while all these splendid shops, cafés, bankers' houses, and private hotels stood full of holes as the most wretched hovels in the most squalid streets.

In the wide, handsome Boulevard des Italiens, the first object of interest was the Café de Paris, of which, it was said, all the inhabitants had been killed, not by firing from without, for the windows were untouched, but by massacre within.

All the houses on the south side, and many on the north side, were injured; and more and more were the marks of violence as we advanced. The most dilapidated of all was the house from which it was at first falsely asserted that the fatal shot had come—the magnificent Hotel Sallandrouze. In the Boulevard Montmartre the sight was still more frightful: round the corner was a tailor's establishment shattered by cannon; then a porcelain shop with ruined door-posts, and shutters closed behind the empty frames, telling of death and mourning within. At last there was scarcely a house with windows unbroken; most of them, with their five or six stories, were riddled from attic to ground-floor. And these, be it remembered, were all in the scene, not of fighting, but of massacre.

The Boulevards de Bonne Nouvelle and Poissonnière, where street-fighting had been, were less injured; but the Corps de Garde at the end, standing on the highest point of the hill that descends to Porte St. Denis, showed the rough handling of the insurgents, and the soldiers at the door looked very sulky. It stirred my indignation, as we gazed on the sad sights all round, to behold two soldiers of the line stopping to point at one of the most

ruined houses, and laughing with an air of triumph.

At the bottom of the descent on the other side stood the now too renowned gates — the Porte St. Denis, the very centre and heart of the desperate struggle of Thursday; a little beyond is the Porte St. Martin, the space between the two gates having been filled with insurgents. At the door of a shop (a *marchande de modes*) stood a pretty young woman making up a cap. We spoke to her; she came forward, working and talking to us on the late events with a very surprising levity, which displeased us in spite of her pretty looks and nice manners.

"Had there been much fighting?" we asked, by way of a beginning.

"Oh yes," she said, with a saucy smile; "mais nous y sommes habitués."

The barricade, she said, had extended across the whole wide road, but it was not well made; she evidently thought scorn of it compared with those of former *émeutes*. She said there were *messieurs* leading the people, as was customary; they would not rise of themselves without some such excitement. The troops, she said, fired into all the windows without any distinction, if any one looked out of them;

she had remained hidden in the house all the time.

I observed, not very reflectively, that I should have been tempted to look out.

"If you had, you would have been killed," she said, laughing.

She would not own to having taken either part, saying that the best course on all such occasions was to remain tranquil. During the whole conversation, though she was very polite, her laughing manner never ceased, and we quitted her, trying to find in her "nous y sommes habitués" the apology not unneeded.

Next day we went to the cemetery of Père la Chaise; and strange was the cold, dumb solitude of that place of sleep high over the blood-stained and agonized city. We asked our guide, as we gazed from the height at Mont St. Valérien, whether the generals were still confined there. He shook his head, and said, diplomatically, this was not the place for politics; it was the only spot where all such things were shut out. Nevertheless, we asked where those who fell in the *émeute* had been buried, and he pointed to a spot far down, a portion of ground lately taken in, with rough, heavy, wet soil, where small white tombstones looked like pieces of chalk stuck about, and

where ten or twelve bodies had been crowded in. But the greater part, he said, had been buried at Montmartre, where all the unclaimed bodies were conveyed: of the thirty-eight lately laid there all but three had been recognized. The *chef des barricades* had been brought by his friends to Père la Chaise, and buried as a martyr. He told us also of a Polish count who had joined the *rouges* and fallen in the struggle. All this he said in English, for fear of being overheard.

All this time arrests were occurring almost daily, till the prisons were crowded with their inmates, and banishments and *déportations* followed in shoals: two thousand were, on one occasion, sent to Algeria. It may be imagined how often in those days social meetings were turned to scenes of sorrow. One could scarcely meet a French acquaintance who had not his tale to tell of dearest friends just seized, without warning, perhaps at night, and shipped off, unseen, untried, to deadly climates for captivity or life-long exile.

But these things were done in silence and spoken of in whispers. After the first blank terror a discreet reserve and sullen indifference seemed to prevail. This mixture of fear and apathy struck me so much that, discoursing on

it to our very clever and spirited *bonne*, Constance, I permitted myself to say something about *lâcheté*. Instantly her French blood was up, and she told me that an English *demoiselle* knew nothing about it, and that it was extraordinary to find people of education so *bornés*, and that the poor had a much juster notions of things; that we believed all we had heard in the salons, which was told us out of *persiflage*, and for our belief, in which we were afterwards laughed at. When she grew cooler, she allowed that there was not much to be said for Louis Napoleon, whom she professed not to love *pour sa personne;* but it was still that terrible bugbear, *les rouges*, *les rouges*. Truly, by their own showing, the French are in a pitiable condition. Can it then be that a great, proud, brave nation has no alternative between putting its neck under a usurper's heel or giving its throat to a gang of monsters? What a sight, that of a whole people crawling to Louis Napoleon's feet, and piteously crying, "Take our liberties; only protect us from these dreadful *rouges*, who are coming to seize our money and cut our throats!"

CHAPTER III.

M. LE PROFESSEUR.

WELL, the short and sharp struggle was over; Paris was trampled in the dust, and her liberties were no more. But still she must meet and talk about her humiliation, if about nothing else. And we too went out, though only among those with whom we sympathized. We sought Madame Gibbs's democratic salons, prepared to meet men who, we were told, felt with varied agonies of rage, grief, and shame, that France had now lost her place among the nations. As I entered I thought especially of M. Lamourette, who, I had heard, was in such deep dejection as to go about ashamed of being a Frenchman, and wishing himself *un Anglais*. As I well knew my friend's particular feelings about my countrymen, I did full justice to this expression of humiliation.

The rooms were crowded, but as soon as I entered I recognized the voice of the sorrowing patriot; I knew him at once by the loudness of his hilarity. He was there beside a

fair, quiet young lady, who stood statue-like, in graceful calm, presiding at the tea-table, himself pouring out words and gesticulation fast as shot, and evidently doing the intensely agreeable. The aspect of the whole party, indeed, was not other than that of men, I am glad to say, in excellent health and spirits. To be sure, whenever we talked politics, the same strain would be renewed; produced, as I thought, by the mortifying consciousness that they ought to have prevented the *coup d'état*, and had not done so. Formerly I had thought that keen sense of public deterioration a hopeful sign. I knew not what to say of it now; I wanted deeds, not words.

But here comes the facetious professor, sliding up to me glass in eye, with a couple of bows, and the sprightly inquiry, "Eh bien, mademoiselle, gardez-vous toujours vos préjugés atroces — êtes-vous convertie à nous?" and I must prepare myself not for sympathetic political bewailings, but for a hurricane of wit and fun. So I plunged at once into warfare; and in a little while he turned to a very clever-looking philosophical Frenchman, who came up for a moment to listen, with "I can not persuade mademoiselle that we are not serpents." "Tandis que nous ne sommes que des

colombes," is the rejoinder, with the meekest air possible.

Presently M. Lamourette put the trying question—the question of questions—"Did I think the French resembled monkeys?" He would have an answer, he repeated, and urged the question. Driven into a corner, my politeness or my French failed me, or some demon impelled me to a caricature of sincerity; I said, "Un peu." It was very stupid of me, and I felt it so, when I saw his joyous expression change to a grave, even chagrined one. He went on to attack Englishwomen (almost seriously) as cruel and unfeeling. "As savages," he said, "wore suspended to their waists the heads of their enemies, so did the Englishwomen take people's hearts, and hang them up as trophies." He took his revenge; an Englishwoman's masculine beau-ideal, he asserted, was a *tambour-majeur* (none of my French friends, I may observe, measured five feet seven); and who, with true insular brutishness, showed his devotion to the woman he loved by trampling her under foot on all occasions.

After contradicting him moderately, I then, to soothe his injured feelings, allowed the French to be amiable, infinitely agreeable, full of talent.

"Yes, yes, we understand all that," he interrupted, in tones of exaggerated humility, "gracieux, mais singes encore."

Unfortunate confession of mine! when will it be forgotten?

At last I took courage and said, "It surprises me to see you all so gay and *enjoués* after having just gone through such frightful experiences."

"Distinguons, mademoiselle," was his answer, in true French and professional style. "Je vais vous expliquer cela." On the surface, no doubt, and in the excitement of a salon, we seem gay. But, were you to pass in the street the same men whom you have just seen laughing in a salon, you would meet one face more sombre, ferocious, and conspirator-looking than another, and when you came to the gloomiest of all, that would be mine.

"Frenchmen," he continued, now very seriously, "are totally misunderstood. Their society-manners are all assumed; in heart they are timid, diffident, prone to trust, to be impressed and carried away like children, credulous and innocent, with no strength of will, and made to be governed."

"In that case," I said, "it is better to be a Frenchwoman." "C'est vrai, mademoiselle;

in all houses the women reign sovereign, and the men are absolutely passive. *There* they have the good sense to know their nullity; but in the world they are always acting a part, and assuming a character to which they have no pretensions. One man will play misanthrope, another will try to pass for a heartless *persifleur*, another for the subtle, unprincipled intriguer and conspirator—whereas they are incapable of conspiring, not being able to keep a secret, or to remain in the same mind for a day together."

But the professor had at this moment another care which, I thought, weighed heavier on him than the public grief—a course of lectures which he had to deliver at one of the colleges. He had just begun it, and was more troubled in his mind by it than I thought such a clever man need have been. He had returned unwillingly to his work, having put it off as long as he could, and, I fancy, occupied himself in the interval with any thing but the appropriate studies. And now he was haunted by the coming lecture—whether he rode, or danced, or chatted, it was always in his head. His only idea of paradise was to live a whole week without *thinking;* at present, he said, he was not an "être humain"—only a

machine. He complained of the mass of facts which he had to read up for a lecture of scarce an hour's length, which he had no time to digest, and had all in confusion in his head. It kept him up all the previous night, he said; and in the morning he could not breakfast—his throat was dried up. "If I could only eat and sleep," said he, "I might do better."

All this he seemed anxious to explain, to account for what he feared might be thought the insufficiency and want of interest of his lectures. Sibyl had attended one, and he was evidently fearful that she had not been sufficiently entertained. I said his subject had been a little dry.

"Oh, but wait," he said; "I am going to lecture on Shakspeare and on les drames de l'amour, and then I shall be plus gai et impétueux."

I told him I was sorry he was to take Shakspeare for his subject, as I had a conviction it was one no Frenchman *could* understand.

"Vous verrez! vous verrez!" he answered, with confidence.

I now discovered in my friend a full share of what is affirmed of Frenchmen, that, with the appearance of the happiest self-conceit,

they are in reality sensitive, most uncomfortably self-conscious, and afraid of ridicule. He complained of the additional constraint caused by the nature of his audience, part of whom were *demoiselles*, before whom he was not permitted to discourse "sur l'amour et la jalousie." "Not," as he explained, "that I can perceive that the *demoiselles* object to it at all, but the mothers look indignant, and declare that their daughters know nothing, and ought to know nothing, of such things. Ah, ciel! c'est bien difficile pour un homme modeste et délicat comme moi de se bien comporter dans ces cas-ci."

"Et puis," he went on in tones more injured still, "there come elderly females with baskets, who in the middle of the lecture take out of them a bottle of wine, and bread and cheese, and eat and drink in my very face just when I am trying to be most interesting—cela me dérange horriblement."

Having relieved himself thus far, the afflicted professor announced "qu'il fallait se sacrifier," and went off to waltz and polk with several very pretty girls, to whom he surrendered himself with an admirably got-up air of enjoyment. I saw him at intervals flitting and whisking about the room, and, when for the moment he had no young ladies to talk to,

playing with his pocket-handkerchief, like a kitten with her tail.

But my part of confidante and consoler to Madame Gibbs's guests was not yet done. Two more sufferers engaged my attention—a struggling artist and a despairing Republican. The artist was a melancholy genius, interesting as a man of sensitive imagination, and admirable because, by being steadfastly true to his own inspiration, he condemned himself to present ill-success and poverty. As for the Republican, no personal sorrow occupied him, no garrulous complaint soothed his pain, nor could any by-play of raillery, polking, or pretty young ladies distract it. *I* rather sought him out than he me. A quiet dejection sat on his countenance, he spoke little and very low, and seemed afraid to trust himself on the topic of the day; nor did his gentle nature deal in any phrases of indignation or despair. This was not from fear, for he had done much to compromise himself by continued intercourse with friends deeply concerned in late events, and in them his thoughts were now absorbed—in the fathers of families, who sat in prison, waiting, unconvicted and untried, to be shipped off into life-long and solitary exile —the *enfants de famille*, those young men of

good bourgeois houses who, stung by a generous frenzy, had rushed into a struggle they knew to be vain, and now lay with other murdered bodies in the Cemetery of Montmartre. There, as he told me, he had spent the last night among thirty fresh corpses just flung there, and not yet buried, but covered up to the necks with earth. Among these ghastly projecting heads he had wandered for hours, sometimes having to kneel on the breast of one corpse to look into the face of another.

When my friend touched on these dangerous topics, he turned from the company and spoke in under-tones; for even here there might be spies. And certainly one neat Frenchman, of small size, whose name I did not know, was hovering by the whole time with a most comical air of perking curiosity, dodging behind us, and peeping at us over the back of the sofa, and between ourselves and the chimney-piece. But I hope no harm will follow to the dear, pure-hearted, tender-souled man, who, however, has been in prison two or three times already. The listener was, perhaps, a fancy Jesuit; this is a species of fungus which has lately grown up very rapidly from the corrupt soil, a specious Ultramontanism being now decidedly the fashion.

And now it grew time to depart, but not before exchanging a word or two more with M. le Professeur, and promising him and myself to attend his next lecture, to try if the presence of an *Anglaise* can by any possible magnetism inspire him with a due appreciation of Shakspeare. Looking anxiously at Sibyl, he said, when first he saw her in the audience, he was frightened, knowing madame to be "un peu moqueuse," but that her "air bienveillant" restored his courage; he hoped Mdlle. Béatrice would be equally merciful. Certainly, no one would have guessed M. Lamourette to be thus timid; but human nature is a problem.

I kept my promise and attended the lecture, which, after all this confidence and condolence, was but decent feeling. Judging from what I already knew of him, I expected clearness, vivacity, and happy delivery, rather than depth; but I liked to go, because I liked the man, and heard general praise of his ability. The lecture was held in the large hall of a public college, three-fourths of which were filled with young students, while in front, just under the tribune, was a space railed off for lady-hearers, where sat the *jeunes filles* whom he had described as "rangées tout en face de lui," and

across whom he carefully looked "vers les plus laids des étudiants."

Gradually the room filled, yet the lecturer appeared not; he was called for repeatedly, but French impatience showed itself at first only in a playful form; the students stamped in polka time, and cut jokes. Still he was invisible, and at last the audience grew turbulent and called fiercely for him. Unhappy man, he was close within hearing, in his little den behind the tribune, agonizingly scribbling the last words of his discourse. Symptoms of a row appeared, but were stopped by the lecturer's at last rushing upon the platform, in a shy, hurried manner, flushed and fluttered, perhaps a little angry. He carried three large books, and heaps of paper under his arm; these he dropped on the desk, bowed uncomfortably, hid his face in his hands for an instant, wiped and put on his spectacles, in exchange for the glass which he sports in private life, took a violent gulp at the indispensable *eau sucrée*, uttered a faint and humble "Messieurs," and began.

The first words were an apology for being late, with a pathetic statement of the number of lectures he had weekly to prepare, and a sort of proud-humility appeal to their candor and

indulgence. This pacified "la jeune France," who clapped its hands, and then M. Lamourette went into his subject.

Before the end of the first sentence all timidity vanished; he grew fluent, rapid, joyous; if ever he hesitated for a word, it was for the best word, and the best in a moment was sure to come. His manner was as easy and eager as in conversation; his hands, which by the way were small, white, and delicate, darted about everywhere, were clasped, twirled round, pointed up and down; and his face worked with the same electric play, till he came to the conclusion of some vehement passage, and would then throw himself completely back in his chair and smile benevolently up at the ceiling.

As for the matter, it was well enough. Although upon poetical subjects, to my mind it was neither poetical nor philosophical; I certainly received no new lights, but I approved of the general justness of his opinions, the clearness with which they were expressed, and the pleasantries with which they were seasoned. But when he came to the promised subject, the test, the touch-stone, Shakspeare, why then followed—just what I expected—some minute comparisons with Voltaire, allowing

certain little points of superiority in the English dramatist, of which the most important was that "his personages never addressed the audience, but always each other!" (though in his next lecture he apologized for having too much "sacrifié Voltaire à l'autel de Shakspeare"); some patronizing praise of the English poet's imaginativeness; and some stern justice dealt to his "défauts de goût" — "même vous qui adorez Shakspeare, vous conviendrez qu'il est très-sauvage," etc.

While I listened, I sat swelling with all the true English pride and worship of the divinity so witlessly profaned, not indeed with the ignorant contempt, the stupid sneers, the pedantic abuse of the old school, which one could but have enjoyed, but with the intended candor, the little, feeble, condescending praise, the finikin objections, the meagre analysis of a clever man of the present day, who only — didn't know what he was talking about! I revolved answers, I rounded periods, and pointed arguments, which I felt only too certain would fail me in the hour of need. My one consolation was, that there sat listening also an Italian gentleman whom I knew, and who knew Shakspeare as well as a German could, and who would, I also knew, when we came

out, join me in criticism of the lecturer, and say, as indeed he did with mild scorn, "He does not understand Shakspeare." And when reminded that M. Lamourette had stated that his next lecture would be on a new subject, answered emphatically, "So much the better."

Let me do M. Lamourette justice; he took occasion to quote a well-known passage from an English writer on English constitutional liberty, and he did it with a clear ringing voice and bold emphasis, which pointed its application beyond mistake. But again — what humor had seized him, I know not—he made a quite unnecessary hit at the poor *Anglais* in the application of the word *sorcier*, which I did not quite understand, but which his French audience did, for they laughed rapturously. Then, looking down at us, he added, "Je demande pardon à tous les Anglais présents," at which his English audience laughed as heartily, to show that the pardon was given. The allusion was afterwards carefully explained to me by Hermine (who, I think, enjoyed it) as referring to the noted ugliness of Englishmen—a fact which I thought required confirmation, but I would not dispute on matters of taste, and only smiled at my friend's rancor against

"les Anglais" — "pas les Anglaises," as he had once, with a deep bow, explained to me.

In the course of the lecture a dark cloud came over the lecturer's brow; he hesitated, stopped, fixed a jealous, upbraiding eye on a very retired corner of the room, then went on in sharp, exasperated tones, rasping out his words with superfluous emphasis. I looked too, and with difficulty discovered in a recess, quite in the shade, M. Émile, his hat drawn over his brows—I could not see his face, but the professor had, or had divined its secret—he was asleep! It seems some official duty occasionally obliges the *militaire* to be present at his friend's lecture, and on this occasion, feeling the approach of a natural infirmity, he tried hard to screen himself; but that sensitive gentleman, short-sighted as he was, had found him out. What! go to this lecture and —sleep! It was too much! Certainly my friend the professor is a most thin-skinned individual, though not, I fancy, at all difficult to manage by one who understands him. This I begin to do, having discovered the ease with which he is mortified; his vivid, yet artless jealousy of other men; his suspiciousness, which causes him to look unhappy if a word of English is spoken before him, and, if a laugh

or smile accompany it, to inquire anxiously, "Ai-je dit quelque chose de ridicule?"

So, when next I met him *en soirée*, I determined to be friendly and conciliating; and first I said polite things as to the interest of his lecture. He recurred with animation to his passage from Burke, and asked what I thought of the translation.

"It was very good, monsieur, and you gave it with great spirit; but your lectures will be suppressed if you make any more such quotations."

He looked intensely pleased at this, and said, "Oh, pour cela, that must be as it may; I have no fear, moi;" and he went on triumphantly, "In my opening lecture this year, I took care to say as follows: 'On the subject of politics, messieurs, you have already heard my opinions, and I have changed *none* of them since we met last.' Well, if for such statements I am to be *destitué* of my office, I can bear it."

I honored the brave little man, and began quite mildly on the Shakspeare subject. Indeed, it did not much signify what line I took, for M. Lamourette proved himself perfectly good-humored, very witty, and utterly invincible. Still, it *was* trying when another gen-

tleman came up — one of whose intellect I thought highly, and who generally agreed with me most respectfully and admiringly — and who now tranquilly put forward several of the worst French heresies on the subject, which, however, were the more pardonable in him, as he did not understand one word of English.

I looked helplessly round for my Italian *littérateur*. How gladly would I, an Englishwoman, have put the cause of the English poet into the hands of an Italian, to be defended in French! But he was not there. So I succumbed by changing the subject, and M. Lamourette, smiling, paid me the very finest of fine compliments, thereby proving that he thought me utterly vanquished.

CHAPTER IV.

M. ÉMILE.

I PERCEIVE that in my account of this last *soirée* I have not mentioned the young *militaire*. In truth, being detained by professional business, he came late, and for but ten minutes; but he escorted Sibyl and me home. There had been that day some fine government ceremonies, in which of course the soldiers had played a conspicuous part. I asked M. Émile if he had been at the Tuileries, where the principal show took place. "No," he said, with a dry tone of disdain; "I was obliged to be on duty at first at Notre-Dame, but nothing obliged me to be at the Tuileries."

Nothing can exceed the contemptuous indifference shown by all the Frenchmen I have met for the grand fêtes and reviews with which they have of late been surfeited. This, no doubt, is to be expected of professing Republicans or Legitimists; but even in the streets and among the common crowds I have seen little curiosity. It seems as if even the French mind can not always be fed through the eyes,

that there are wrongs too fresh and too deep to be healed with showers of comfits, that the *spectacle* forced upon them by a bayonet's point can be but moderately enjoyed, and that the command "Eat, drink, and be merry, *or* to-morrow you die," is not one to stimulate even a Paris populace to a very hearty appetite.

But to return to M. Émile. Though we miss him sometimes at the *soirées*, we see a good deal of him at other times, as in the character of Hermine's cousin he has free entry to us. Having discovered Sibyl's taste for harmless amusement, like a good genius, he is always coming with some agreeable suggestion or other. Schemes of pleasure always follow his appearance; I can not say how they spring up. There is no formal arrangement, but his entrance, his presence, seem to let in a soft sunshine, in which bright fancies and smiling schemes bud and bloom spontaneously, every thing organizing itself smoothly and completely, as by light touches of an invisible hand. In no way does French inventiveness show more gracefully than in these delicate adornments of daily life.

Little as I yet know of M. Émile, I believe with Sibyl that he is to be trusted, and I look on him as a specimen of the best class of "la

jeune France"—a class in which the fine qualities that made France's former greatness still exist, and which, if its manhood be but true to its youth, may yet regenerate the nation. Of this class it has always struck me that young Bellot (the heroic sailor who sought for Franklin's grave and found his own) was a type, perhaps exceptionally perfect. The golden trait is a generous, a chivalrous enthusiasm of feeling, giving to temperament and tendencies an almost ideal beauty.

Such an one does Émile de Fleury appear to me; a youth of a country family, brought up among domestic union and kindliness, and then, still fresh and pure, and ardent to excel, transferred to Paris, where he devotes himself to the studies of his profession, firmly confiding in his power of forcing his way from its lowly beginnings up to its most radiant heights. As frankly as he imparts all this, does he also display the more child-like parts of his character, unchecked, as an English youth might be, by a dread of the words "novice" or "egotist." He speaks of his home in the South, of family meetings, of moonlight rambles in the forests around his native place, prolonged amidst songs and tinkling of guitars; he talks even of the little brothers and sisters, or of the elder

sister who, young and beautiful, chose to become a nun, and whom, when she sickens and grows feeble under too zealous austerities, he visits daily in her Paris convent with an unfailing gift of flowers. In deeper tones he confides to you all about his mother—how she was made up of a "bon sens exquis et d'une angélique douceur." How perfect a womanly picture do these two combined traits suggest!

As for his religion, he is a liberal Catholic, with more of devout feeling than of formularized creed. "As far as doctrines go," he says, "I could make you in half an hour as good a Catholic as I am." Yet, then recalling the fêtes of his childhood, the walks to church by his mother's side, the music and flowers, and her tender prayers, he would avow himself "Catholique depuis les racines des cheveux jusqu'aux plantes des pieds." Equally does he glow in speaking of episodes in his youth of wild and stern life, long months spent in solitude, perhaps in hardship, among mountains, but glorified by the hope of distinction, and softened by the delight of natural beauty, on which he will dwell with touches of the poet. He loves alike the *sapins* on the mountain, the *bleuets* in the corn-field, the balmy roses of a garden-bower, with a love which makes

him sometimes impatient of a life shackled by rigid official duties. Stung, too, by the struggling contradiction between an ambition to rise in his profession and aversion to a connection with despotic government, the young brow will furrow, and the words escape in a sharp sigh, "Oh, mon indépendance! qui me la rendra?" A minute afterwards (these French are such strange beings) a perverse fit may seize him, and with a kind of pleasant sourness he will *débiter* much gloomy misanthropy and cynicism; he will *dénigrer* all these charms, rail at romance, and try obstinately to seem *blasé* and insensible — nay, will almost persuade you to believe him, so prettily does he act it.

Indeed, some temporary gloom may well be excused to a young man, mature in thought beyond his years, under his present circumstances. Just wakened to real life from those shining visions and aspirations, at a period of peculiar darkness and discouragement to all good patriots — at the moment, too, of experiencing life's first and worst loss, a dearly loved mother's death—it is no wonder if he sometimes fancies himself disenchanted for life. But, no! that fine organization and fervid nature have heart and hope in them yet; though

whether they will survive when youth's fair illusions are really gone, amidst the azote of that social and political atmosphere, may be sorrowfully doubted. From instances that I have seen, I could paint him as he *may* be a dozen years hence, when the work of *désillusionnement* is complete. He is already conscious that he is not what he was, and can philosophize, half coldly, half lightly, on the change, although the fine natural qualities shed even yet a kind of half-painful lustre over the ruins. He feels a secret contempt for others, fostering in him a cynical pride not founded on any real self-esteem; the generous trust, the enthusiastic self-devotion, are no more; he may continue benevolent in action, but has ceased to be kindly in thought. With probity and independence at the core, he becomes subtle and tortuous in his social relations, his feelings run no longer straight onward in the daylight. He takes a sombre pleasure in defying scrutiny, misleading friendly conjecture, disappointing nascent confidence, and leaving an impression of something much bitterer and harder than he really is.

Yet even from such a fall I believe he might recover; should some great cause call aloud for heroic self-sacrifice, all his best nature

would spring up, crying in answer to that trumpet-voice, "Here I am—send me." But if, instead of that stirring anguish and passion and strife, this deadly torpor of a debasing tyranny should deepen and strengthen over the nation, till its best hearts and brains yield to the hopeless spell—ah, what will he then be?

Gladly do I return from such a fancy picture to the reality of the young, generous, amiable Émile as he is. At present, whatever mask he may choose to wear is but a transparent one, and we two—Sibyl especially—know always how in a moment to make it drop completely off. We have fortunately taught him, too, that Englishwomen can bear — nay, can welcome — truth, even when it is not sweet as flattery; and he takes pleasure in speaking it to us. He will kindly warn me of social blunders; and when either of us—I through want of readiness, or Sibyl from her careless dislike to trouble—make slips in French, in accent, in idiom, or grammar, such as cause some cheerful misunderstanding, or some engaging or perhaps embarrassing mistake, M. Émile will laugh at us freely, with fearless smile, and saucy, sparkling eye. "I could make a dictionary of the words you invent, mademoiselle," he once said.

And when, on his granting that the particular word I had coined was wanted, I said, "Je vous en fais cadeau," he answered, "I thank you; I shall value it so highly that I shall take care never to use it."

But when invited to make mistakes in return, he is far too *fin* to give us this advantage, pleading total ignorance of English, even to its alphabet.

This fondness of the Frenchman for supporting a *rôle* in social intercourse is very marked. If he is brave, honorable, enthusiastic, he enjoys his own fine qualities as much as any one can; without broadly making himself a *personnage de roman*, he yet lets you conceive that impression of him, and takes care to suppress any thing that may disturb it. Yet even these little artifices are part of the real naturalness, and please me accordingly. For, in spite of his instinct (rather than habit) of accommodating himself to his companion, so impressionable, so eagerly unreserved is he, that truth will often come out brusquely, or, as he himself says, "brutalement."

And then, too, the French dearly like excitement in conversation—it is a game which they play with all their hearts—so that contradiction, raillery, even a little anger, will come

to add zest, and entertain the stranger who is on the look-out for national or individual traits. It is true, one does not always keep cool one's self—one grows eager, emphatic, words come with an ardent yet hesitating eloquence, the heart beats, the cheeks glow, and one becomes frank and brusque too—and then, a pleased laugh, a quietly-bantering comment, or a bit of delicate criticism, tells one that the Frenchman, in his turn, is making his reflections and composing his theory.

There is a piquancy in this intercourse like that of two hostile armies who, during some brief armistice, enter each other's camps, mingle gayly, and make friendship even out of the grim warfare which has brought them thus together.

In the course of my acquaintance with M. Lamourette, he published a volume of memoirs, on which I knew him to have expended a good deal of thought and research, and which, of course, I sometimes made the theme of my conversation with him. With a delightful simplicity he assured me that he was perfectly indifferent to its success. "Praise," he said, "only vexes me, and I would rather the work was not noticed at all. When it was read aloud in the Académie, and a vote of ap-

proval passed upon it, I could hardly persuade myself to open the report that announced it to me. Maintenant, quant à ce livre, je n'y pense jamais."

I took all this gravely and respectfully. I knew the professor was a blighted, jaded, satiated being; in England, perhaps, we might have hinted that he was an *enfante gâté;* but I chose to take him as he represented himself. When, a day or two after, he came to us *en soirée*, his book was lying on a little table, and I saw his quick eye drawn and fixed as by magnetism on it.

"What a pity," I said, "that you were not here sooner! A literary gentleman, interested in the subject you wrote of, has been here," and I named the gentleman, who was a writer of repute. "He saw the book, and asked questions about it; and I dare say would have liked to talk to you on the subject."

For the rest of the evening, and for some days after, my friend could not get that gentleman out of his head. I mentioned a slight critical remark that had been made on the work, and I saw him from time to time approach and take up the book, ask what "ce monsieur" had said, and recur to the subject, while I smiled internally with tender pleasure

at his innocent inconsistency. For indeed, my dear professor, you are really very thin-skinned, and the mask of indifference does not sit well on you. You are like a child — while pleased, while amused, and to a certain extent flattered, no one can be more gay, good-humored, and engaging than you are; but let the required sweet aliment be withdrawn, or the immediate prospect of gratification be in another direction, or greater amusement to be found elsewhere, and you can, I suspect, become ill-mannered, even ill-bred, to a degree the composed Englishman could not be guilty of.

These charming French *are* mostly egotists —the word must be used, but it is no very branding one—and they would not be quite so charming if they were not. For in the good natures this egotism flatters the egotism of others by an intelligent sympathy and a quick sensibility to all the small details of feeling. It gives the power of studying the souls of others alike with fellow-feeling and the feelings of an artist.

Certainly they are superlative conversers. I know not how to describe it; I can only recall having been held hour by hour, unconscious whether I talked or not, scarcely wondering at the ease with which all kinds of

material were melted together in the stream of that multifarious talk, aware only of a sharp, crisp, piquant scent and flavor of delightful novelty. Never had I been so unreserved or heard such unreserved utterance before—all was new, yet all seemed quite natural, and suited to the long-felt wants and vague conceptions of one's own mind. It was a web of feeling and reasoning, just light enough for conversation, across which anecdotes or illustrations were darted like sparkles and jets of light; or, still more interesting, a flow of recollections out of a varied life, stories tragic and comic, bits of deeply-felt autobiography, with touches of thought—melancholy, sarcastic, or philosophic—and many an interruption of ingenious turn or piquant reply. Wherever he wills, the Frenchman leads you; no path so deep and sinuous, no wood-shade so wild and dim, but you follow undoubtingly. In the metaphysics of the heart no one surpasses him; no such philosophic sentimentalist, no such soul-analyzer and connoisseur of the passions as he. And into the trying, tempting maze he draws you unawares, luring you on with ever and anon some glancing sun-streak of allusion to his own experience. I often have read (in novels especially) of this kind of conversation,

but never realized it till I heard it from a clever and sympathetic Frenchman. I know not how much art there was in all this—if art it was, it was perfect as nature.

Of course, with all this charm, there were certain things which had a great tendency to provoke the Britannic mind, or, if it were in a proper state, to amuse it. They arose mostly from the all but impossibility to the French mind of understanding foreign nations and foreign languages, or looking at any thing from other than a French point of view. That French ignorance on English subjects continued to me a daily source of astonishment, just as it was in the first bloom and dawn of my perception thereof. It might be mortifying, were it not, as I believe, just as *crasse* on every foreign subject. It may be our English mistakes on things French are equally stupendous to *their* eyes; still I think we, at any rate, know a little better what views *they* hold on subjects differently related by the two nations, and so escape that *naïveté* of ignorance which they display.

There are topics which, for the sake of one's serenity of mind, it is good to avoid. What were my feelings when the candid, intelligent, well-informed M. Émile made the (as I after-

wards found) common assertion that the English were beaten at Waterloo! When, with a vehemence which almost prevented any satisfactory reasoning on the subject, I combated this stupefying statement, nothing could exceed the mild condescension of the smile and tone with which I was kindly informed that "it was permitted to a demoiselle to be not very *au fait* upon military matters."

Why is it that all technicalities and facts fail one just at such times? and why does the French language, in which a hundred times before one has been pert and pugnacious enough, fail as well? But let it pass; we have no business to boast of Waterloo, no more right to be proud of it than the French of a gallantly-sustained defeat. It was a miserable thing that it had to be fought at all, and if it still stands as a barrier against the perfect friendship of two brave nations, I could rather be sorry for it.

Another time, Émile insisted that England had made a good thing of the war with Napoleon, her whole object in it having, indeed, been to increase her possessions; and when humbly entreated to say what possessions she had gained by it, he promptly answered, "Jamaica." When, however, with vehemence beyond strict courtesy, we complained of these

"queer French notions," most disarming was the candid reply, "C'est trop vrai; we are but moderately informed about other nations, and England is, perhaps, not the one which we understand best."

But enough of these irritating and foolish topics, which had better never arise between French and English, each of whom, of course, can but look on that side of the shield whose glittering metal is next to their eyes. The habit of reading in history only what tells best for our national pride will never be conquered while national feeling has a root in our hearts; but I hold that with strangers the modest or well-bred man will no more vaunt his country than he will his family or himself.

Still, leaving party questions aside, it is curious how shamefully, how grotesquely inaccurate they often are in their statement of facts, even when there is no object to be gained by it, and when one would have thought it much easier to be accurate. In history or biography their preference of fancy to fact, their disregard of dates, their disfigurements of names and titles—here Michelet, Lamartine, Sainte-Beuve, rise up before me as first-class offenders—is something past speaking of. These mistakes do not come from want of imagination; there

is but too much of that quality in the rapidity with which half-impressions are seized on and worked up; they are run away with by a theory, and generalize to a wonderful extent; and then their national conceit satisfies them that they are quite right, and seeks no more information to correct first ideas. Nor with them is it, as with the Irish, produced by confusion of head; they are quick and exact, *logiques* in their mode of reasoning, pellucidly clear—nay, mathematically precise—in their forms of expression; there are no muddled half-conceptions in the fire and crystal of the French brain. Nor is it from any incapacity for patient, continued application; this can be most eminently exercised when results can be obtained no other way.

Is it then symptomatic of the often imputed French insincerity? and is that charge a just one? I can not yet say. I suppose while human nature is human nature, the masses as well as individuals will find some object for whose sake they think it worth while to sacrifice truth, or, as I have heard it philosophically defined, "to postpone the recognition of the fact to the exigencies of the moment;" and to the vain, sensitive French nature "effect" seems that powerful temptation. This tend-

ency glares on us from the proclamations on their walls, from the language of the Senate, the Bar, the Academy, and the Pulpit, from the pages of their public journals and their most "standard" histories. To produce an "effect" they will employ false coloring, will suppress and add, and, if that *effect* be a claptrap grand sentiment or a piece of showy patriotism, will confess to it even with pride. Many a piquant instance of this is full and fresh in my memory at this moment, but I will not enlarge farther on a fact generally acknowledged.

But, as to personal and social insincerity, I think we are apt to be unjust to the French, from not understanding their manners as well as they do themselves. They are not necessarily untruthful in their expressions of liking or interest, only we must not expect the feeling to last. Every moment is with them taken up with vivid interests — in succession; for they are too strong to be simultaneous. There is not room for all at once, and, as they say themselves, "la vie de Paris est dévorante." The amiable French manner is also misleading; because *that* is universal, and because generous, unselfish goodness is not universal with them any more than in England, we hastily conclude that fine show, as we call it, to be always pretense.

Still, were one to judge from certain small traits, one would conclude that the French standard of honor was not quite so high as our own. "Petits mensonges," or "white lies," are things they are not a bit ashamed of; "mensonge" is not the least an impolite answer to even a lady's assertion; listening at a door, and panegyrizing one's own book in a public journal, are proceedings I have heard avowed by a most estimable gentleman; and conventional politeness is carried so far that it scarcely deceives. What with us is mere honesty, is with them *brutalité*, for which one gains no sort of credit.

I feel as if I ought to apologize for the decisive tone and rapid generalization exhibited in this critique on a nation whom I know, after all, but in glimpses. As a stranger and foreigner, I dwelt chiefly in the outworks of French society. But then they are a people whose life is so much external that the stranger may see and learn much without going farther than those outworks. And if I can not myself pronounce a judgment, I am at least very qualified to report their own; for hardly a day passed that some French man or woman did not treat me to an opinion or assertion about themselves.

CHAPTER V.

THE JOUR DE L'AN.

WELL, the elections are finished. Those of Paris were over in one day; those of the country took five or six days. The result is of course the same in both, and Louis Napoleon is confirmed by more than seven millions against about six hundred thousand. Nothing could exceed the quiet with which it all took place; no one could guess that the votes of a nation were being given. The abstentions were so numerous, that, had they been added to the *nons*, the *ouis* would have been outvoted.

So France has secured her ten years' dictator; and all joy to her on her choice. The news has been received with a kind of sulky indifference; no guns firing, no illuminations; and meanwhile arrests continue, societies are suppressed, *espionnage* is diligently practiced, military law of the severest kind reigns in the provinces, and Paris sets to her task of ushering gayly in the new year with what skill she may.

The Boulevards, as usual, are turned into a fair, with a succession of stalls full of articles for *étrennes;* but there are great fears about their sale, the money-market is in so anxious a state. Terrible scenes, Sibyl tells me, are wont to be exhibited on the Boulevards at this time, children wanting all the splendid things without exception that they see there — crying loudly for them—rolling on the ground.

But there is to be a greater show on New-year's-day, for the president is then to be proclaimed, not for ten years, but for life, at Notre-Dame, with great pomp, but, as is expected, not too great enthusiasm. Meanwhile, I am making trial of Paris in winter; and as for four-fifths of the year she deserves to be painted *en beau* in colors of gold and azure, we may pardon her uncommon disagreeableness for this fifth. Certainly she is very dreary when given up to incessant rain, and when our sources of amusement are restricted to what we can see from the windows of her at her dingiest—sloppy pavements and streaming spouts, a few busy women lifting their dresses in the uncompromising manner of all true *Parisiennes* in rain and dirt, a few soldiers in gray cloaks, all the scanty world under umbrellas, and gloom and dreariness everywhere.

If, weary of in-doors, we steal out at some tolerable interval, the result is not enjoyment. The streets are now a bed of thick rich mud, and there is little to choose between the greasy, slippery *trottoir* and the *pavé*, with pools formed round every stone. The crossings are almost impassable, the water from spouts and projections drips on one as one creeps along the narrow bit of trottoir close to the wall, shrinking from the carts and omnibuses, whose huge wheels almost touch the windows, as they plough through and splash up the mud. The Place de la Concorde, with its extent of swimming asphalt, is a lake of mire; the Seine runs turbid, thick, and dull green under its now misty bridges, in fine weather so glitteringly aërial; the public buildings look grim and desponding, and seem to wear mourning. Ah, fair Paris! how like you are — in these two phases — to some beauty first seen in her fête-days, all smiling and charming, made up of graces and good-humor, and the same beauty wearing a shabby dressing-gown and a sulky face, in a disorderly bedroom at home!

Paris is rather less intolerable when the weather is only windy and cold. Sibyl and I then persist in our English habit of walking

forth in the Champs Élysées—not merely in the dress-promenades of the afternoon, but in the early morning, when one meets few but some determined men, who, cloaked, furred, and hooded up, with all the careful and grotesque contrivances of the Parisian winter toilet, glare on us with double energy from their forests of beard and hair.

There goes a hat blown suddenly from the Pont de la Concorde into the river; the young owner laughs a little ruefully as it disappears, and passes on his way bare-headed with a merry-faced grisette. There goes another! the sleety wind, blowing sharp as a thousand needles across the Place, has driven it far on, but it is picked up and restored, and the picker-up, as he passes on, observes to us, confidingly, in a discontented tone, "Il a bien peu me dire merci." See! there is an old woman timidly descending some steps from one of the Tuileries terraces; a young man in a blouse walking some way behind runs on, gives her his hand, helps her carefully down, and leaves her with a bow.

I shall not soon forget that winter's day (New-year's-day, 1852) when I went to witness the inauguration of the Saviour of Society (now self-named for life) in a mixed relig-

ious and political service at Notre-Dame. I went with one companion, the best I could have wished for, and one whose feelings on the subject of the great show were, I knew, the same as mine. We went out with some degree of excitement as to what we should see: it was a remarkable day, at any rate; it might be made one not to be forgotten by some pistol-shot which should point the moral of the pageant, and settle accounts with the chief actor — a thing which some at least thought not impossible.

It was a day of thickest fog; there was, too, a damp, poisonous, cruel chill; the mist was incessantly drizzling, and condensing to ice-drops upon us; the wind cut like a sword-edge, and my hands were stung with intolerable cold. At the Place de la Concorde the fountains were frozen; the naiads, covered with icicles, were shivering in their winter bath; the wood walks around the Tuileries were a mystery; the only things distinctly seen being the troops crossing our path, dragoons, *chasseurs*, and the line. When the mist cleared a little, the trees appeared completely clad in a foliage of white frost-work, full and graceful as their former mantle of green; all down the avenue they exhibited this snowy fancy garniture. As we

passed the Suspension Bridge, we saw between its planks the dull, deep, smooth green of the river, and pieces of ice came drifting down the still stream. The poplars and willows along the river-side were in stiff white spikes, or hung with white beads, the boughs looking like so many silver strings, while the iron and bronze gates and railings were all powdered with pearls.

When we entered the *île* by the Petit Pont, we found the entrance to the Place de Notre-Dame choked up with a crowd of *commis*, *blouses*, *gamins*, so that we could not even get a sight of the soldiers filling the Place. But my friend, with calm reliance on the chivalry of French soldiers, assured me that if we could squeeze near enough to be seen by them we should be sure to be let into the square. And so it happened; and on the *perron* of the Hotel Dieu, opposite the west front of Notre-Dame, we stood and commanded the whole scene.

The mist was still so intense that the three splendid portals opposite us, the great rose-window, and the round-arched galleries, stood out as if from a gray blank. The Place was full of soldiers only, every inlet carefully guarded. A bustle of preparation began; now and then the people carelessly cried, "Il

vient!" and criticisms, sometimes disparaging, were exchanged on the "Élu du Ciel."

At length the great bells of Notre-Dame began to ring, and then came a clash of military music, but the loud tolling sound swelled over trumpets and drums. Then there rushed upon the scene a splendid troop of lancers, suddenly springing out of the mist, all borne forward at one proud bound, like so many strong waves heaving one after another. On they came, three or four abreast, their lances held up tall and straight, the flags quivering with one slight thrill together—then seemed to vanish again. In reality they wheeled round to the other side of the Place. Then arms were presented, the dragoons raised their long, terrible broadswords—and then, almost invisible, came the president's carriage, closely invested by a double ring of lancers, "joliment escorté," as the people said—safe enough from any possibility of a shot.

So came the hero of the scene; he was dressed in a general's uniform, and bowed his cocked hat, not out of, but inside, the closed windows. It was well that the drums beat their loudest to drown the *vivats* that should have been uttered, but were not. The front rank of soldiers only shouted, and that with no

accordant faces. Six civilian hats were taken off (I counted them), and three voices cheered; as on other occasions, there was no enthusiasm that was not paid for. The new-made absolute ruler vanished into Notre-Dame, and we were left to moralize over this rather appropriate climax to the whole thing — Louis Napoleon inaugurated in a fog.

For a cold hour we waited, and admired the front of the cathedral hung with banners, the endless crowd of carved angels, saints, and patriarchs looking from the three beautiful portals in calm, sad scorn at that insolent blazonry, and on the gay central scroll whereon, in huge, triumphant, gilded figures, glared the well-known number 7,000,000! The world without amused itself as well as it could; the dragoons dismounted, danced and "skylarked" in their big boots; the officers gossiped with each other and arranged their long, flowing plumes. The infantry chatted with the crowd, lighted cigars from their neighbors, helped old women up the steps with a polite "Madame, permettez;" then, all feeling extremely cold, a simultaneous stamp went through the line, and the people took it up in good time.

The crowd meanwhile continued its small comments: "Ce n'est pas aujourd'hui le so

leil d'Austerlitz," said one; another, expressing the then common feeling that our premier was the general advocate of freedom, observed, "Mais Lord Palmerston n'est pas mort, Dieu merci!" They did not imagine that he had already claimed a kindred spirit in the "prince-president," and appreciated the successful *coup d'état.*

At last the doors re-opened, again bells tolled and drums beat, again that fine troop of lancers swept by; the dragoons jumped to their saddles, their swords ringing as they did so, and galloped into position. The Elected of Heaven reappeared, in the same safe state as before, and vanished—as he had come—in a mist.

When all was over, the world outside wanted to get into Notre-Dame, which at first they were permitted to do; but the *sergents-de-ville*, who were in an exceedingly bad humor, turned savage, and, growling forth prohibitions in every form, thrust us violently out. Judging by their faces, they ought, as my friend observed, to have been hanged long ago. They looked like men conscious of having taken part in a failure, and disposed to revenge it on the passive populace. We heard nothing save that the religious ceremony had taken place,

the *maires* of the several arrondissements applauding loudly.

On the Suspension Bridge we stopped to buy a *médaillon* of Louis Napoleon from people selling saucerfuls of a plated and gilt, faithless and flattering likeness. Also a programme of the day's doings, a rudely-printed half-sheet, with a very coarse portrait of the president in the middle, over his head a representation of the Holy Ghost as a dove, the Saviour on the cross on one side, and the Almighty himself on the other—all, as it were, in a family-party together! The programme was conceived in terms to match; and, to add interest to the occasion, a wonderful, almost miraculous discovery was announced — made in the course of repairs to the cathedral porch—of documents hid in a pillar, of so primeval a date as the reign of Louis XV.!

As we returned home along the quays, we met the special correspondent of one of the London papers, who somehow had failed to be at his post in time, and asked us for an account of the day. He told us two facts: one, that the president, in his reception at the Tuileries last night, had in his speech kindly promised the people "a constitution in accordance with their democratic instincts;" the other, that

there was a new decree ordering the arrest of any one who talked politics in the streets, to be handed over, not to the regular courts, but to the police—that is, to summary punishment, without examination or appeal.

We reached home at last, the bitter cold and mortal fatigue of the three hours' walking and standing being almost forgotten in our friend's fascinating conversation. And as I lay that evening on the sofa, quite worn out with fatigue, I went months back in thought. Who would have told that I—long shut up amidst the deep quiet of my secluded English home —should on this day be witnessing the installation of the new Napoleon, having for my companion—oh, what good-fortune for a hero-worshipping girl!—a poet! thus living through a chapter of history with—I will not name him —but he is now the greatest English poet of our day.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE FAUBOURG ST. GERMAIN.

AFTER all these literary and republican *soirées*, I had a glimpse of the Parisian aristocratic world. In some things it was very unlike the world in which I had lived many months; which fact I discovered in the very first party of the kind which Sibyl and I attended, soon after the *coup d'état*.

We had left salons filled with wrath, despair, and tumult, mutiny as of the Titans against the new Jove; I found here dwellers on the Olympian heights of indifference, meeting in an atmosphere of Elysian calm. The first person who greeted me was M. le Duc de Montorgueil, a proud aristocrat in grain, though he affected to be much besides. He assumed devotion, patronized literature, was something of a visionary philosopher, who spun fine theories about virtue, justice, and liberty, about which he loved to harangue. I spoke to him with a heart full of what I had seen and heard, only pitying beforehand what he must feel even more deeply than I.

An air of *grand-seigneur insouciance* and a thin strident laugh put all "heroics" to flight. I asked him if he had voted (it was during the elections). He said, carelessly, "Non; je me suis abstenu."

"Why?" was my surprised inquiry.

"Because I know of no right that they have to impose a vote on me."

And then, professing an easy belief that the Republic was still to be (he, though an aristocrat all over, was yet a sort of theoretic fancy Republican), and passing by Louis Napoleon with the lightest and calmest disdain, he proceeded to descant on some book of elegant philosophy which was just then the vogue.

The plan of "abstention" is that which most of the *grands seigneurs* (especially the Legitimists) have followed; it is a protest which the system of ballot renders imperceptible, and which only helps to swell the president's majority.

I almost fancied—strong Legitimist as the marquis was—that he was not wholly discontented with the event that had put an extinguisher on "ces gueux de Républicains," as, with a good-humored, quiet intensity of scorn, he called them. He denied the cruelties of which Paris yet bore the crimson tokens, say-

ing politely that the worst stories were impossible, for that no Frenchman *could* hurt a woman or a child, hoped that these little incidents would not frighten me away from Paris, and altogether appeared as if all this had nothing to do with *him*. As the room began to fill, and Sibyl, Hermine, and I drew our chairs together to make room for the new-comers, Sibyl said, in her thoughtless way, "Nous faisons une barricade."

"Ah," answered the gallant aristocrat, "s'il y avait sur les barricades de tels petits objets, tout le monde s'empresserait de les attaquer."

This is one way, certainly, of taking the doom of one's nation.

But I will pass from those first dark winter days, when, after a brief spasm, France accepted her fate. The months passed on, and she was bearing it as well as she might, surprised, perhaps, to find how bearable it was; and now spring and summer were smiling on the renewed Paris gayeties. There was a grand hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain which we occasionally frequented, one of those which distinguish the Rues Grenelle, Varenne, St. Dominique, amidst the choked mass of houses, and narrow, gloomy lanes which com-

pose that quarter of learned institutions, quaint antiquities, and hideous squalors.

See, there it is! one of those solemn, stately old hotels, with its great arched doors richly carved, the spandrels filled up with fretted iron-work, the columns surmounted by stone Cupids, or figures in bronze, the grand solid balconies, with their mouldering rich stone ornaments. Through the *porte-cochère* appears a stately court, full of orange-trees and flower-beds; while a low stone wall lets us see the large garden belonging to it, crowding together its masses of foliage, while a profusion of white-blossomed acacia boughs hangs over the wall, so that the street is scented like a woodland grove. This particular hotel belonged to Madame de Mailly, an aged *grande dame*, who owned the whole house, though she occupied only the ground-floor. She loved to collect what she considered a select society, so of course we feel flattered at being included. I believe we owed this distinction originally to Monsieur le Comte, Sibyl's quiet, indolent adorer, for, in spite of the match on the tapis with Hermine, one can see whose society he finds the most agreeable.

Madame de Mailly had bad health, occasional bad spirits, which, in speaking to us, she

called, by way of accommodating herself to our English ideas, "le spleen"—a malady which the French still firmly believe to be paramount among us—a lofty manner, and a great deal of benevolence, as well as a love of patronizing genius after a crotchety fashion of her own. This latter taste varied our herd of beatified immortals (I mean sleepy legitimist aristocrats) with a few notorieties, who were a great deal more amusing to me. As for madame's own opinions—political, social, or religious—all that belonged to her as an old *aristocrate*, *royaliste*, and *dévote*—a "vieille de la vieille"—I will say nothing. I will not expose the inevitable results of that elegant exile from the world, that conservative trance of existence, that tender and touching nursing of old illusions and clinging to an impossible state of things. I will not surprise nor amuse my readers with any of the *bêtises*, of which some chance report, straying beyond the ring-fence of that unspeakably respectable faubourg, so much delights all the others.

I will only say that they were for the most part graceful, kindly, engaging people, though, with the exception of this genius-patronizing *grande dame*, the ladies were mostly inaccessible. The *grands seigneurs* one met every now

and then at mixed *soirées*, but their wives prided themselves on having exclusive societies. It is probable that the gentlemen had chosen best, and went wherever they found themselves best amused. When one of these stray lambs, such as M. de Montorgueil or M. de T——, came forth to browse a while on the grassy patches of our wild democratic common, I used to follow them back in reverent fancy to the solemn, ineffable beatitude and repose of their own regal stalls and rich park-pastures, and wonder how it was with them there.

This May evening of which I am going to speak, we walked, as we not unfrequently did, to the house of Madame de Mailly. It was a dark, sultry, stormy evening; the purple sky closed the dense, dark walls round the spires and domes of Paris, massing them all into one blot; sudden lightnings showed us the Palace of the Corps Législatif, across the bridge on which the blind flute-player continued his year-long serenade.

We arrived: the *antichambre* was full of hats and great-coats; yet, on entering the great drawing-room, a dimly-lighted, empty, silent space met our view; all the visitors appeared to have been mysteriously swallowed up. The

drawing-room windows were all open; we looked into the dark garden; a sudden purple lightning-flash sculptured, as it were, in a moment a group of people sitting on chairs and couches under the lime-trees, on the grass. We are lost for an instant in the twilight assemblage, but the stately figure of our hostess raises itself aloft from the couch on which it is her habit to recline, and solemnly greets her guests. There are but a few, after all; the *soirée* is not begun. Madame is enjoying a little quiet intellectual talk with her gentlemen intimates.

There is the editor of an intensely orthodox and legitimist journal, fiery in its hatred of England, infantine in its devout credulity; he himself is gay, audacious, unscrupulous, at once good-humored and deliberately insulting—arrogant *par calcul*, reckless and insulting also on system. One sees and hears in him in five minutes the dashing, brilliant, wholly untrustworthy Ultramontanist.

There, again, is a melancholy, superstitious devotee, physically strong and daring, mentally a cramped, timid, blinded slave; at the Church's bidding he dares all dangers and endures all hardships, yet covers from society, under a shy mask, his secret ardor. He is not,

like the first, a flint-stone with sparkles on its surface, but a granite rock with fire at its core.

And there is a third *dévot*, of another type; on the smooth, fair features plays a stereotyped smile; of those placid eyes one can never tell whether the expression be craft or *niaiserie;* he pours forth *banalités*, and laughs with a false air of enjoyment. So bland, quiet, and watchful is he, that sometimes I suspect him of being not only a covert Jesuit, but a spy: he has been heard, I am told, to utter liberal opinions. His general line is conversion; he was introduced to me as a great theological doctor; but I think my faith can stand his arguments, just as well as my feelings can resist the commonplace *galanteries* (not much sillier) with which he interlards them.

Suddenly Madame de Mailly says, in rather an awakened tone, as if sure of giving pleasure, "Mdlle. Béatrice, M. le Duc;" and I am aware of a figure, seen but in outline, bowing to me straight formal bows, with that punctilious, solicitous air which accompanies French fine breeding. For a moment I try to remember who, of all the titles that haunt this salon, it may be; till another opportune lightning-flash reveals more clearly the small, bowing figure, attired in nankeen trowsers, after the manner

of French summer-simplicity. Straightway I recall M. de Montorgueil, whom I had met several times at different houses, but of whom some months' interment in his château of Provence had caused me wholly to forget the existence. Now, he was one to whom I had a very fine and perfect antipathy. He was of the *vieille noblesse* and the old school, and, while much superior in mere finish of manner to those of a newer class, was yet much less prepossessing. He devoted himself, of course, in society to the young ladies, but, though single and pertinacious in his purpose, was never obtrusive, and would sit in well-bred patience till he had an opportunity. He was fond of intellectual and literary subjects; he expressed himself easily and clearly; this was, as he said, because he thought clearly — in fine, he was a capital instructor in French conversation. But I soon felt that his good manners were merely the accident of his station, a lesson taught so early that it was now a habit quite unconnected with himself; and that his intellectual tendencies were not much more real. He added to this a sham Republicanism and sham devotion, each a mere brain-belief ingrafted on a cold *égoïste* disposition, preceded, I imagine, by a youth and middle age

of Parisian license (though, probably, always of a cautious, cold-hearted, imaginative sort), and all pervaded by a something of petty commonplace suiting well with a sharp, clear, but *borné* understanding. He professed to have begun by believing nothing, but to have known in his youth the sufferings which result from ardent passions, which drove him to religion. I observe, by the way, that in French literature the revolt of youthful minds from established theological dogmas is always represented as the accompaniment and result of a vicious life, skepticism, in short, meaning immorality; whereas in England it happens that the young men most disposed to question or throw off orthodox beliefs are generally as strict and pure in their morals as they are daring in their speculations.

The form of piety which M. le Duc had embraced was a most extreme Roman Catholicism; he went every day to mass, though he said he found it *pénible*, and sought much to convert young ladies; but his outward manifestations did not much recommend his creed or the kind of piety which he talked by heart. He had, too, a sort of pedantic sentimentality; he said other nations might *like*, but the French only could *love*. He spoke of the passions of

the heart and of the head, and how that the Northern nations had neither, but lived mostly "par l'estomac;" with him I suspected passions and affections existed only in that small portion of the brain which communicates with the tongue. He harangued against *mariages de convenance*, and advocated conjugal love; he meant to write a book on the subject, and so went about among his acquaintances collecting facts to illustrate the baneful effects of loveless marriages; for which, I suppose, he was only looked upon as an unpardonable old gossip. In the mean while, he lived with his wife on terms of the most orthodox indifference. Madame la Duchesse never appeared; she remained at the chateau from April to December, while he was amusing himself in Paris, and, if she was asked after, he always answered only, "Madame est souffrante." Once, when he was describing to me the rural delights of his chateau-life, I took the opportunity of asking him, "Have you any children?" and receiving an answer in the negative, said "it was a pity." "Non," he answered, very decidedly. "Ce n'est pas dommage, je ne les désire pas; les enfants me dérangeraient dans mon travail."

Having given all this long description, to

show why I had that disinclination towards M. le Duc, I can only conjecture that it was on account of that same antipathy that I felt driven, as by an uncontrollable necessity, to show that gentleman more friendliness than I felt for him or wished him to believe in. He was in amazingly good spirits at his return to his beloved Paris, though he had flourished in the country; a something of bucolic joviality was added to his tint and dimensions.

Not quite recovered from the first confusion of having quite forgotten him, I held out my hand, which, by-the-bye, is a very particular mark of favor here. It was taken with a murmur of delight, and held so long that I began to wonder when I should have it back again.

Having nothing else in particular to say, I observed, "My sister and I were speaking of you to-day, and wondering when you would reappear." This was true, but I did not add that we had expressed our perfect resignation at his absence, and had straightway wholly forgotten him again. I felt a little ashamed when he answered, in much delight, "Ah, vous avez pensé à moi? Il y a donc de la sympathie entre nous? Que c'est touchant!"

He had been busy, he told me, in organiz-

ing on his estate a girls' school, of which it was evident he was extremely proud.

"What was the school-mistress?" I inquired.

"La perfection!" he answered, with animation; "une religieuse, si jolie, si gracieuse;" and here the Frenchman of the world shone out to the extinction of the philosophical *dévot.* A thousand compliments on the kind interest I took in his poor humble attempts to do good followed.

Ere long, as soft-falling rain-drops had followed the lightning, we all took refuge indoors; the small circle gathered together, and our hostess remained invisible in the depths of a profound arm-chair, where she was wont to hold equally or still profounder discourse with some pet savant or artist whom she had called to her side. By-and-by the circle widened, and guest after guest dropped in, till the large room was full of feathers and white necks, and full floating dresses, and gentlemen standing up, black and tall, or circulating from one radiant group to another.

I asked one of my friends — the orthodox journalist I mentioned before (whom I shall call M. Jules)—why there was so much more splendid an assemblage than usual: there

must have been especial invitations for this evening.

"You are right," he said; "we are to have a treat—the *début* of a lady who is going upon the stage. As a journalist, I am infinitely interested in rising talent; I am always prophesying its splendid development, but I don't see much of it after the first year. This lady is to *déclamer* some scenes of tragedy and comedy. Mon Dieu! the tragedy and comedy will be doubly supplied, for you must know she is an especial *protégée* of madame our hostess; consequently, all the other *protégées* and clients are jealous of her, some for her beauty, some for her talents. Moreover, there is here a *dame* who boasts to be quite as clever in her way, and of quite as much social influence as our hostess, but they hate each other—like dear friends—and I suspect there will be a party got up against this unfortunate Ermengarde. You know an unestablished talent of this kind is very easily run down, and I expect the ordeal here will be as severe as on the boards of the Français or the Gymnase. Pour moi, I am her friend, and have engaged to do my best for her; I am to lead the applause, and we are to arrange the pit so as to get a good body of *claqueurs*. I shall place you, mademoiselle, be-

side me; you must take your cue from me, and applaud fervently. Think," he was pleased to add, "you will be doing it for a lady, young, beautiful, and gifted as yourself, who, having sank into poverty, is obliged to earn her bread."

Young—beautiful—gifted! I was so used to French compliments now that I only smiled —unoffended and unmoved. "Who is Ermengarde?" I asked.

"She is the wife of a public official once highly favored and esteemed, now ruined by enemies and a fatal combination of circumstances; this generous and devoted woman is resolved to raise him again to his natural and just position. You will admire and be interested in her, I know; vous avez le cœur bon et sensible, a heart which does homage to goodness and talent, and which will not be rendered cold and hostile by charms which *you* need not fear, but which are almost necessary to her success in the path she has chosen."

In spite of all this fine sentimentality and superb flattery, I was puzzled by the expression of my friend's eye, which bordered on the comic; but I knew he was one who seldom chose to be perfectly serious, and I deter-

mined to reserve my opinion till I saw and had learned something of the fair Ermengarde. In the mean while, till she should appear, I amused myself with watching the various personages in the room, which I could do the more easily as most of them were as yet unknown to me.

It was a sufficiently varied assemblage; rank and talent had joined their forces. There is a fine French poet, a sweet English poetess—there is the opponent of Ermengarde and of her patroness, as yet unsuspicious of the counter-manœuvres preparing against her, and looking supreme satisfaction at herself, and supreme scorn of all but the small clique which she kept under her command. This same opponent was none other than Madame de Fleury — Hermine's mother. She was a woman of a small, elegant figure, and a face whose irregular, queerly twisted features had an odd but pleasant effect in good-humor, though they were more quickly transformed to actual ugliness by an unamiable emotion than any I ever saw. Their most characteristic expression was a compound of conceit, arrogance, and intense malice; but her manners, whenever that familiar demon of spite was not uppermost, were gay, witty, and flatteringly

polite. Hermine had a kind of delicate resemblance to her mother; her bright young face exhibited some of the same traits, but in her they looked attractive.

In the same group were two or three other young ladies, friends of Hermine, with their gorgeous mammas. One of these girls was a superb beauty, though not of a kind to interest one long, as her charm was simply that of lines and colors. Intensely black eyes and hair, pencilled dark arched eyebrows, set off by a dazzling carmine complexion and the rich red flowers she wore on her head, with a ruby ribbon passed under the glossy front bands, gave that most un-English effect of beauty which is the best kind that one sees here, and of which the only expressions admitted of are a rapid coquettish play, a regal smile, or a hard, imperious pride.

I did not much admire the manners of these young ladies, least of all those of the beauty, who was called Laure, and who seemed full of vain self-consciousness. They laughed loud, made a noise, moved their chairs, tossed their heads, shook their dresses, tapped their mothers, borrowed fans, and seemed trying to attract notice. I do not think they could have been *la crême de la crême*—they must

have been wealthy *aspirantes*. Several young men certainly approached near Mademoiselle Laure, but—strangely enough, though I suppose most correctly French — talked entirely to her handsome mamma, who seemed well inclined to keep them, while her daughter amused herself by looking a little scornful.

However, as Hermine and the others were meantime talking and laughing most gayly with me, the lofty Laure bent forward, and said, "Allez-vous beaucoup dans le monde, mademoiselle?" Presently we found ourselves discussing the great subject of the day, the empress-elect, whom Mademoiselle Laure began describing to me with great animation and minuteness, though it soon appeared that there was no particular good-will felt towards her. The young ladies, especially the beauty, betrayed a sense of insult that a foreigner had been chosen for that place of honor. I did not intrude on them my eccentric English view of its being rather a place of *dis*honor. They cordially agreed to my conjecture that they considered themselves every bit as worthy of empress-ship as Mademoiselle de Montijo, made game of parts of the Emperor's matrimonial speech, and were altogether rather lofty and scornful about it. I presently

gathered that the fair Laure, though of noble and Legitimist family, would have no objection to figure in the plebeian court from which family prejudice as yet excluded her.

While we were still talking, I was again addressed by M. de Montorgueil, who had left me promising to return—a promise I could have excused his not keeping. He was wonderfully smitten with the charms of Mademoiselle Laure, and inquired of me, aside, who was that "belle personne?" was she French? for she was of the Spanish, at least of the *méridional* type.

I said, I thought pure French; still he persisted she must have Spanish blood in her. So I turned to her, and put the question direct. She laughed, and said "Yes; her mother was a Spaniard, and her father was of the south of France, and she herself by birth a Marseillaise." When I conveyed this back to M. le Duc, he began praising her grace and beauty in detail. "Look," says he, "how supple she is; look at her wrists and hands as she plays her fan; none but a Spaniard has that graceful pliancy."

Of course I agreed, as it was all uttered in a voice which I was convinced was meant to meet her ear, as it could hardly help doing,

and seemed to have done, by the graciousness of her adieux to me when her party took leave shortly after.

But I must not look only at handsome women, especially just now when the very handsomest man I ever saw is close by, making his way to Sibyl's side, and next moment bowing to me. He too is of the south, but his style is far softer and more ideal. His imperially tall figure, the superb curl and blackness of his mustache and hair, the straight pale features, the suppressed ardor of his large black eyes, the languid haughty grace of his manner, his twenty-two years, his title of marquis—do not all these things make the very hero of a French romance? I don't know if he is, or wishes to be one; I can discern that he is accustomed to conquer, and to believe himself irresistible, and I think I can read underneath all an intense self-worshipping pride, and that cold calmness against which passion may break its heart in vain. He is "trying it on" now with Sibyl; I wonder if he thinks he has succeeded. I can't fancy any man having so conceited an idea; with all that innocent sweetness, there is something so puzzling, so almost hopeless in her. A word can touch and interest her; a frank, cordial manner delights her,

and all the folds of reserve drop aside; but power over her heart, her soul, no one seems to have, except her child and myself. She can no more be caught and detained than a bird that lights for a moment on a blossomed spray; and all she does is so utterly, unconsciously unpremeditated, one wonders what delicate instinct so frequently guides her right; but one scarcely wonders that every one seems to take up the protection of one who will not protect herself.

Suddenly symptoms of distraction and amusement appear in the expectant circles. Different groups pause in their talk, look sideways, struggle with suppressed smiles, with undeniable laughter. The cool, clever journalist, who was at that moment arguing some subtle theological point with me, suddenly parenthesized in the very core of the argument, and in precisely the same tone, "Look at that man, he comes from the Tuileries;" and then he went on unmoved as before.

I looked, and beheld a little man enter, looking like a wizen and bedizened ape. He was a man I knew as perhaps the most curiously ugly of my acquaintance, but had difficulty in recognizing under his present metamorphosis; though the fine uniform, with epaulettes, gold

braid, little sword, and Legion of Honor ribbon, made his frog-like figure, his stiff black wig, his immense green spectacles, and huge mouth, look more of a caricature than ever.

The secret was that he had just received an office—a place, I think, in some new council the great ruler had chosen to create, and, knowing the weakness of man's heart, had appended thereto a gay costume. As it was, many had had the unaccommodating folly to resist the offer of this distinction even as an insult; but M. Ledindon was not one of these, and so one who ought only to have been a crack-brained savant was turned into a politician—and here he was among us, an Imperialist, an enemy, a spy! "Let us take no notice of him—he wants to be admired," said one sensible, tranquil man. So we continued talking as usual, not very freely perhaps (no one did so in those days), but still, not suppressing any side hit, disdainful tone, or cynical smile, from regard to the neighborhood of one who had just been breathing semi-imperial air.

The effects produced by this remarkable apparition were various. One queer, plain-spoken, impetuous lady, stopped in what she was saying by seeing her companion's eye fixed elsewhere, turned sharp round, beheld that pre-

posterous vision, gave a rapid stare, exclaimed in a jerk, "Mon Dieu!"—then, turning abruptly round and choking down her emotion, resumed her talk with only a fiercer and more vigorous vivacity. I suffered much from a violent desire to laugh, which my companion's perfectly unmoved face made me conceive it my duty to suppress. He inquired gravely what I saw remarkable about that gentleman, and seemed so wholly unconscious of any ridicule attaching to him that I had to relieve myself by commenting on the ugliness of the uniform. "Oui," said he, demurely, "mais la personne l'embellit. Vous paraissez beaucoup occupée de ce monsieur," he observed, and politely, but quite unfoundedly, added, "Et lui aussi, il paraît beaucoup occupé de vous." I envied some gentlemen who, retired on a sofa and screened from observation, indulged themselves in the refreshment of unrestrained laughter.

All this while never was ball-room beauty sending her first thrill of admiration through a crowd more utterly satisfied than this little monster. To one who had the cold-blooded malice to congratulate him (it was my cynical journalist, who wished, I suppose, to crown my admiration) he spoke modestly of "ce

compliment qu'on m'a fait," described with reverent *gusto* the brilliant *soirée* he had just left, and the mild and gracious majesty of S. A. R., and, in short, perfumed that free atmosphere with the incense of a court.

It was a very different apparition that came next. A young and handsome woman entered, leaning on the arm of an elderly man, a thin, pale, bent figure. "Voilà Ermengarde!" was gently buzzed around. I looked attentively at both—I scarcely knew which of the pair struck me most.

The husband (whose misfortunes were imputed to misdoing) was, in face, features, and expression, colorless and unmarked, yet not from original stupidity, but as if worn out by years of trouble and struggle; the stamp might once have been strong, but constant attrition had half effaced it. When I knew his history, I did not wonder at the look. It was the air of one who, tossed about on the sea of life, shipwrecked often, battered and bruised, had lost all standing-place, and, floating uncertainly about, clung here and there, and only humbly sought leave to rest awhile, to use the momentary shelter and support ere he was washed off again to trust to chance whether to sink or swim. With this look as of an unrecog-

nized vagrant in society he attended his wife, whose youth and bolder spirit pushed her forward to something more like a distinctive place. Yet in her, too, I perceived a lurking uneasiness arming itself in haughty defiance, and stinging her to desperate resolve. Certainly, when she entered she was pale and nervous, and very quiet: I saw that she expected hostility, and pitied her.

As for what I thought of her, I could not for some time make up my mind. "How handsome! how disagreeable! yet how very striking!" were my successive impressions. Ermengarde is a splendid-looking creature, but she is (for me) too strongly of the French actress type — and yet what strength, what deep-rooted individuality, what stern and concentrated will, may be read there!

That that strength failed for a moment, and the proud face and figure looked almost timidly shrinking before the assembly where she felt she had no place, made her touching in my eyes. Otherwise, I might have more coldly admired the severe outline of face, the strong black arch of the almost meeting eyebrows, close over her magnificent eyes (great orbs full of a dark radiance), the strong nose and full voluptuous mouth, the great rolls of shin-

ing black hair wound round and round her head under a coronet of black velvet and lace, the figure full, firm, and noble, robed in a rich amber silk, cut very low on the shoulders, which, with the face at present so pale, looked as if carved in yellow ivory.

I half suspected our hostess of an eccentric wish to see a little drawing-room warfare. I believe it was only her wonted indolent passiveness; but certainly she did not manage as she might have done. Many in the room were her enemies, and those who sympathized with her were not in a position to help her. She took refuge beside an English lady to whom she had just been introduced, a lady at once good and gifted. It was the best place in the room, though the contrast was great between the grand, stormy, *prononcée*-looking French actress, and the small, quiet, but pure, sweet, and saintly-looking little English poetess, who spoke to her with gentle kindness. The troubled face grew calm, the half-bitter, half-humbled look began to melt away.

Things, moreover, began to improve for her. The benevolent had been properly primed, the groups were arranged on the right plan, my friend M. Jules was to make the signal for the applause, and the gentleman who was to give

her the *réplique* in the scenes she was about to *déclamer* entered at last. This was a most excellent, soft-hearted old gentleman of high rank and illustrious lineage, who was, in fact, Ermengarde's chief patron, and at whose entrance she smiled with a look of relief and hope. The good old soul took his stand against the wall, arrayed in black velvet shorts, a pair of thick silver-rimmed spectacles over his broad nose, book in hand, full of *bonhomie*, but of no dignity.

A grand Russian princess was to be *the* great judge of the performance: she sat in an arm-chair opposite the actress, looking pompous and critical. Sibyl and I sat at the end of a sofa a few paces from Ermengarde, curious and even anxious, but very passive and modest, as became strangers and foreigners. Just opposite me was a large mirror, in which I could watch not only the countenance of the actress, but all the by-play of the various spectators. Madame de Fleury retreated instantly to a distant part of the room, where she gathered her own clique around her, and began operations by yawning and looking another way. The handsome marquis stood towering in the background, arms folded, eyes burningly riveted on the performer the whole time

with a sombre expression that left no doubt of *his* intense admiration. He seemed to forget for the moment that he too might be looked at, and dropped the soft sentimental mask from a face that then seemed to me to betoken the pride and passions of a tyrant.

The shyest man in the room, a great traveller, had contrived, as shy men so often do, to get into the very most conspicuous position, the empty central space between mirror and fire-place, where Ermengarde was to perform. But suddenly awaking, with a look of dismay, to a sense of his position, he started up and cowered into a place on the sofa by Sibyl and me, and there fell into a deep, gloomy abstraction, which rendered him unconscious of the whole performance.

The lady stepped forth, her paleness changing into a deep crimson, and began to "declaim," first from "Phèdre," to whose scenes of deep, lurid, guilty pathos her rich voice and passionate tones, as well as the rapid, sweeping, stormy movements of her fine figure, and the meteoric flashes of her glorious fiery eyes, certainly did justice. Then came the usual stage tricks, the starting forward, the rushing back, the cowering about the stage, the striking of forehead and heart, and espe-

cially the stretching forth of the arm and the quivering of the forefinger; and when these reached their height there came from the French part of her audience a momentary applause. But I, who had my own deep, preconceived ideas of what was the proper acting, and who had once in my life seen it realized, felt chilled by what might be very suitable to French and violent organizations, and pleasing to kindred eyes. I was full of benevolence, but unable to say that my idea of "Phèdre" was in the least realized. If I was passive, however, others were not; for, at one of the most impassioned parts, I saw one or two persons of the clique referred to turn away, not to hide, but to exhibit, a laugh. Ermengarde's husband, who had fluttered about in nervous suspense all the time, when it was over glided from group to group, watching timidly the expression of every face, and, wherever he thought he discerned symptoms of good-will, pausing in the hope of a compliment. I pitied the poor humbled man, who had once had no need to hold the hat for his wife's earnings.

The second specimen was from the "Misanthrope." Célimène is a very French character, and she did it, after the French style, exceed-

ingly well; she gave the part a new and effective coloring, derived, no doubt, from her own personal sensations. Under the saucy smile, the artificial graces, the brilliant gayety, there lurked something of scornful bitterness, like the proud, rankling sense of wrong; and one passage especially, where the saucy coquette retorts on her jealous detractors, she gave with such gusto and spirit, such haughty smiles, and such triumphantly blazing eyes, that the audience fairly broke into a buzz of pleasure. The good old duke, who had spluttered away the different parts of young lover and censorious prude, and every now and then good-naturedly interrupted himself to cry, "Bravo! charmant! très-bien!" looked really delighted now, and the hostile party correspondingly sulky. But, after all, it was a painful exhibition, and I was glad when the scene, with its by-play of real life and under-meaning, was over, and Ermengarde, complimented by our hostess and led back to her seat by the paternal duke, closed it, amidst pallors and flushings, and agitated breath, with a far more natural and gratified smile than had yet risen to her lips.

A short time after this she appeared at the Théâtre Français, and, to my surprise, found

one of her bitterest critics in the very gentleman who had appealed to my "cœur bon et sensible" to help to champion her against envious detractors. Madame de Fleury won a triumph. How she achieved it I know not; but there was so much love and hate continually lost and won in these smiling salons, that I need not have wondered at any change. The French vanity, at one time so amiable, confiding, loving, and chivalrous, can at others be rabid, cruel, and bitterly ungenerous; and with this powerful lever, no doubt, she had worked. Or was he perhaps all the while an enemy in the guise of an admirer?

CHAPTER VII.

BALLS.

AS the season advanced we varied the prose of Paris society with some of its poetry, and quitted the mere terra firma of such parties as I have just described for the aerial region of the *soirée dansante.* Talking glided into dancing, high silk dresses melted into ethereal muslins and tarlatans, and the agreeable middle-aged men vanished before a crop of half-grown, slender-mustached, small young men, chiefly pupils of the École Polytechnique, who danced demurely, as is the French fashion, discoursed with their partners discreetly and politely, and, laboring under a conviction that all the most charming of their young lady acquaintances were deeply in love with them, made ingenuous confidences on that head to elder men, to be cynically laughed at in consequence.

All this was entertaining, no doubt, and then perhaps the rooms were better, the dancing more graceful, and the dresses, if not the faces, prettier than in ordinary London ball-rooms.

But a ball is not the scene where national character is best displayed; besides, I went to no public ones. These latter had at that time a political character by which the humblest individual in it could not exempt himself from being influenced, and we had no wish to emulate the forty devoted English whose names appeared in the papers a few days after the *coup d'état* as having "dined at the Elysée." So my sense of honor kept me away from the most superb of balls given by the préfet of the Seine to the prince-president at the Hotel de Ville.

It is true I went to see the building a few days after; and when I found myself in the *salle de bal*, alas! I, a girl in my teens, could not help thinking with envy of the happy groups who had had a chance of exhibiting their gay dresses and joyous spirits, their grace and their dancing in this Aladdin's Palace. How grand must have been the long galops through each lofty space between the triple rows of arches and fluted and gilded columns, under a ceiling all blazing with pictures and chandeliers that were so many festoons of pendulous gold, dropped with rainbows, between walls all painted with airy, fanciful arabesques, with mirrors that glittered back a hundred

nymphs for one, every inch of the whole a crowded paradise of rich color and enjoyment! Ah! what Olympian flirtations, of what superseraphic grace and refinement, should have been held in that hall of halls! A vision of De Mornays, Persignys, Princess Mathildes, and a leathery-looking, dead-eyed Idol whom these obsequious phantoms encircled, dispersed that first fair dream.

Private balls I did sometimes, however, attend, but I will describe only one of them, as having been rather more distinctive than the others. It was a Greek ball, given by a Greek princess, and the company, except a very few Englishwomen and Frenchmen, were wholly Greek and Wallachian. How did we all come together? and how did we manage to mix so easily and so agreeably? As I recall this, and other such scenes, there rises in an instant before my sight, like rosy morning clouds in the wide sky, a crowd of young, beauteous heads of many races, princesses by birth or by beauty, some dark-haired, radiant and royal from the South, some angels of the North, blonde and ethereal, with the gold crown of their Saxon hair. And the men, with all their separate spells of genius, high birth, or wild, intense individuality, bringing from all parts of

the world all kinds of histories and destinies, each solitary among crowds, yet most of them drawn to other new-found existences, and some passionately striving to draw those existences to themselves, putting forth temporary tendrils and winning transient power.

At one of these romantic evenings, I saw the meeting of two wild, bearded men — half Englishmen, who had been over half the world, and were now pursuing art and literature in an interval of their adventurous lives. I knew both well, but, though they accidentally met while each conversing with me, it was as strangers, till one suddenly exclaimed, "Did I not meet you six years ago in a slave-market at Bagdad?"

This produced inquiry and final assent. "Will you allow me to press your hand?" resumed the first, in his strange, solemn way and foreign phrase. The second slowly produced that member from his waistcoat-pocket, it was shaken, and then they began talking of beautiful Circassian slaves whom they had seen. I did not think the second man liked the first one. A young Italian joined the group, and, the conversation turning on love, the first, in his strange, vehement, labored tones, pronounced. "Non v' è schiavo così sprezzabile

come un uomo che ama." I listened and thought, "*Your* history is nevertheless in those words."

A few weeks after, and this man, on whose brow, if ever on any, was written a birth-curse, and whose perplexed destiny must, it seemed to me, evolve finally in disaster, lay assassinated on a public staircase. The other returned to distant and savage regions, and has never since been heard of. There was a mystery in all this; but it is not I who may unravel it. It was but one of many facts whereby I learned that this bright, white-palaced Babylon of Paris was built over naphtha lakes, from whose boiling mass escaped from time to time lurid exhalations even through the smooth pavement our sandals trod so lightly.

However, no gloom of this kind shadowed the lively picturesque Greek ball I began to speak of. As we entered the house in the Rue Varenne, we heard quadrilles going on merrily; an old Greek, with a very big head and a most romantic name, who acted as a sort of friend, agent, and major-domo to the princess, advanced to meet us. His proportions were colossal, and did not prepare me for the next apparition, that of the princess, a little dwarfish woman, with a round smiling face,

quick sparkling eyes, and a bird-like vivacity of gesture, well suited to the soft mouse-colored silk that trimly encased her tiny form. She led us to a seat, holding us by the hand, with many kind words and affectionate attentions, which I supposed to be Greek, because they seemed to me neither French nor English. She took us through the four rooms prepared for dancing and supper; in the middle and largest room a ring of ladies gradually formed, sitting formally all round it on benches.

Then stepped or, rather, skipped forward, her daughter, amusingly like her mother, only smaller and nimbler still. There was no possible guessing of her age; she was a perfect pigmy, with manners that you might regard either as the formed and conscious ease of womanhood, or the familiar vivacity of a child. She was all over kindly life and good-humor, a sparkling little thing with bright eyes like her mother, the prettiest, most caressingly attentive manners, and an air of irrepressible happiness. She did the honors as no English girl would or could have done; she came flying across the room, seeing me standing chairless at the other end of it, to bring me to her and seat me by her side. Then she entered into bright, laughing conversation, her words

running into each other like the gay chattering notes of a bird. "How long have you been in Paris? How can you have learned so soon to talk such good French? I am studying it too; I have been four months *en pension* to learn it; I must try to be good and industrious like you."

Then she pointed out to me her mother's sister, another princess, and a very splendid-looking woman, her daughter, whom my little friend perfectly adored, and eagerly asked if I did not admire her too. She was not new to me; I had met her and her mother at Madame de Mailly's, and been much attracted by the girl. She was a slight young creature, sitting alone at a table, turning over a book, apparently quite content with her isolation, quite inaccessible to any gentleman who might approach her, but not unwilling, when occasion arose, to flavor society with her own strong individuality.

I thought she might be a character worth studying, judging first by that *piquante* rather than pretty face, by the coal-black, rippling hair, drawn tightly from the square temples, yet protesting by its crisp curl against that constraint, by the small, pointed features, with their indifferent smile, and the slight yet strong and elastic form, round which fitted closely

the square-cut body of her scarlet plaid dress. I fancied that there was under her girlish reserve and simplicity a nature firm, self-concentrated, even proud, almost fierce—a nature as yet half known to herself, coiled up, like some wild animal, in some shady recess of that sunny girl-life. I thought she must have inherited her father's character, for just of that stuff should a patriot insurgent be made, and he was one of those who had won Greece's liberties. I learned afterwards that Mademoiselle Hélène had a brother who, though a pupil in the École Polytechnique, had chosen, like an ill-considered young foreigner as he was, to be at the top of a barricade during the two fearful days, and that she had hardly been kept by force from rushing out, in the passion of her sisterly affection, to join her brother there.

She was of Athenian race, born in Constantinople, brought up in Russia, living in Paris, yet Greek all over; and when she spoke of her classic studies (she was then in Sophocles), it was in a tone of more thorough interest than she had used about any thing else. Wishing to try how national she was, I asked her how she liked her king (Otho). "Our king?" she answered, with a quiet laugh; "we have none yet; that will come by-and-by."

None of the Paris fine gentlemen seemed to suit the fair Hélène; she constantly turned away with an air of shy pride, very piquant and very hopeless. She danced a little, it is true, but it was silently and carelessly, with the air of a mere looker-on. I only saw once a look of animated observation; it was on the entrance of M. Ledindon, whose appearance in a new costume I related in a former chapter. He observed on it to me afterwards with some surprise: "Do you know that as I passed Mademoiselle Hélène, she laughed, and pointed me out to her mother. I don't know what she could have noticed in me; peut-être," he added, reflectively, passing his hand across the stiff, straight hairs of a most palpable and undeniable black wig, "peut-être mes cheveux étaient un peu dérangés."

M. Ledindon is, I am assured, on the look-out for a wife, and has been so these twenty years; she must be young, handsome, and, most especially, rich, and English; and "chose remarquable," as he himself says, he has not got her yet.

But I am forgetting the ball-room — that bit of Greece in a Paris frame-work. It was filled with Greeks, those who were not pure Hellenes being Wallachians, Moldavians, and

Hungarians — handsome barbarians disguised in civilized attire, with tall forms, straight noses, and strong curly beards, like statues of antique heroes. All round the room sat a circle of dark-eyed classic girls, clustering like so many bouquets of pinks, blue and white, and modest as daughters of Britain, in all the poetry of their floating, girlish robes, contrasted with their statuesque Greek faces. The gentlemen grouped themselves in the centre and in the ante-rooms, talked merrily, and played good-humoredly with various sprightly, well-behaved juvenile Hellenes; and a strange musical language was heard from every group; the sound as of grand old Homeric hexameters kept ringing past me, just like a clear stream running over pebbles. But never did the speakers approach any of us forbidden blossoms of beauty till the music struck up. Then one by one they timidly drew nigh the charmed ring, each picked out a girl, danced silently with her, and, dancing done, as silently restored her to the same place. In spite of this chilling ceremonial, the Homeric heroes went through waltz, polka, schottische, mazurka, and redowa with vehement glee rather than grace; the girls seconding them in innocent-looking, soft, decorous enjoyment.

But all was not in keeping; there, in the midst of these fine-looking Greeks, with their honest, hearty, simple ways, stood *la jeune France*, cold, keen-eyed, and sneering. And I must confess there were specimens of barbarian eccentricity, uncouth form, and grotesque physiognomy, which fairly provoked the ridicule of the one or two malicious Parisians present. Especially contemptuous was M. Lamourette, who found himself there in one of his most capricious and petulant humors. I do not know why he had come at all, unless he was really a little jealous as well as contemptuous; or, perhaps, from having lately had a great deal of hard work to do, his nerves and temper had got into a state of irritation which he found a certain savage pleasure in expressing. In this mood of vivacious sourness he was quite as amusing as in his former brilliant good-humor; but, perhaps, less likeable. No doubt it was "aggravating" to see two or three charming girls whom he considered his exclusive property engrossed by Messieurs les Sauvages. He professed, indeed, entire indifference, and when one and another came up to claim these elegant creatures, he resorted to me in the intervals of my dancing, and, throwing himself in a chair by my side.

with his usual nonchalant vivacity, professed that now he need not sacrifice himself any longer, he need not talk nor trouble himself about all these *gens*, and might resign himself to his only object of desire, "de ne rien faire."

But I knew better, and was not at all surprised when he instantly began to abuse one unfortunate Wallachian gentleman in spectacles, who, with an air of ineffably imbecile beatitude, was dancing with the Princess Hélène. "Can you imagine," he asked, "how a man can succeed in making himself so absurd?—Mon Dieu!" he added, seriously, while following him with his eyes, as if subdued with astonishment, "c'est d'un ridicule fabuleux; a Frenchman, Dieu merci! could not achieve it with his utmost efforts!"

I might have had my own ideas as to what a Frenchman could achieve, but I remained passive while he pursued his unconscious victim with arrows of malice; and then another, who, he declared, made on him the effect of a *hanneton*, because he was dancing with our hostess's daughter. He pronounced this nice little thing a "*coquette effrénée*, who promised but did not fulfill," because in her universal impulsive good-nature she had sometimes said "Yes" to more claimants for her hand than

she could possibly gratify. Thus he went on till a third, in a naval uniform, with sharp dog-like features and an intensely red face, came to carry me off; and when I returned to my place, the abuse was transferred to him, or rather to me, for the improper encouragement I had given him. "Were I your brother," he said, with solemn energy, "I should feel it my duty to prevent you from dancing with him."

"If you could," laughed I. "But why, when it amuses me?"

"Bon! bon!" he said, with severe dignity; "n'en parlons plus. I am sorry that your taste is not more correct; voilà tout. No doubt I make myself enemies by my plain speaking, but I can't help it. Truth is my weakness; I must speak truth or not at all; c'est là ma manière," and here he threw himself still more back in his chair, as if overpowered at this view of his own singular excellence. Somewhat piqued by my not exhibiting the same emotion, "Au reste," he said; "if I have enemies, I don't care; their displeasure does not affect me. All I wish is to please myself," which latter assertion I believed to be perfectly true.

"Then, monsieur, you frankly avow yourself an egotist?"

"Sans doute, we are all egotists; but there are different ways of pleasing one's self—the best is by pleasing others, and I shall be satisfied if I attain that degree of enjoyment with those I care for."

In spite of this, I wondered a little at the turn M. Lamourette's egotism had taken; I scarcely knew then how violently jealous a Frenchman is of another man.

I continued amusing myself with the brilliant scene around until it was time to depart. And then the small *demoiselle* came, with her still smaller brother, to beg us, to entreat, almost to force us to stay. Finding it in vain, she accompanied us to the door with a thousand *gentillesses*, and the boy cloaked us with much gravity and care. After many *adieux* and *au revoirs*, she declared she must "embrasser" me, and stood on tiptoe to give me the prettiest little kiss in the world. I wonder on how many of her some hundred guests the good little thing found it necessary to bestow the same cordialities. At any rate, it was a pleasant and artless way of doing the honors, and I know some ladies who would be none the worse for taking a hint from it.

When I returned, I told Sibyl, who had not accompanied me, about M. Lamourette's un-

usual petulance. She laughed a little saucily, and only said, "We need not puzzle ourselves about it, for I don't think we shall see much more of him." In effect, he disappeared from our usual parties, and it was two or three months ere we met him again. When he reappeared he totally ignored Sibyl and me, and devoted himself ostentatiously to Madame de Fleury, who had chosen to make public her disagreement with my sister, and to set up an obvious rivalry with her. Our friend Émile told us, with a kind of pitying condescension, that "ces professeurs" were a class apart, who had not good manners, and must not be too harshly judged. But my own observation helped me to the chief cause of the professor's vagaries. He had always had a fluttering, ostentatious admiration for Sibyl, which she received with the gayest indifference, knowing well in how little danger all these *grandes passions* involved the susceptible French heart. But one day M. Lamourette was pleased to be more serious, and risked a rejection, which, though very kindly given, wounded at once his love and his self-love very considerably. The consequence was that he returned to Madame de Fleury's clique (to which he originally belonged) with a tolerable dose of bitterness

against his stony-hearted idol—my sister. I don't think it was a deeply rancorous feeling, for at heart he was *bon enfant*, after all. But Madame de Fleury had no notion of wasting so much precious resentment; so she petted and nursed his angry confidences till he had committed himself to a breach with Sibyl, and an alliance with her venomous little stepmother-in-law. I was, of course, included in the ban, and from that time, I dare say, as long as he remembered us, he ridiculed with his countrywomen "ces deux bégueules anglaises."

I have said enough, I think, to show that these *soirées* were not composed of a society of seraphs, or held in a garden of Eden. I became gradually aware that my first bright impressions of "the world" required modifying. "Tenir un salon" is a great mystery, an important science in Paris, and it has been laid down as an axiom that the prestige of a salon lasts only two years; for some undefinable cause it then declines, the best people leave it, and all the mistress's exertions will not get it up again. For, eminently sociable as the Frenchman is, this curiously organized being is as capable of ennui as any Englishman of them all, but he shines in the candid and petulant vivacity with which he expresses the same.

His light spirit and nervous sensitiveness are soon liable to depression; a thing pleases him heartily, it is true, but not for long; it must be unfamiliar enough to allow him to idealize it.

And then both hosts and guests have human hearts and prides and vanities, which, if they do not rasp the surface, still strongly affect the springs that work beneath it. It looks such a light, easy, pretty play; people come and go, and nothing seems smoother; but ah! the cares and pains of the hostess, the continual beating-up for new recruits, the trapping of lions, the interference and tyranny of favorites, the putting down and driving out of some and the courting of others, the secret jealousies and hostilities of the smiling *demoiselles*, the perfect insight, the calm, critical, I should rather say pleased and sarcastic, observation of the lynx-eyed men on it all! If even a half-initiated stranger could see these things, what must be the wearisome experiences of the hackneyed *habitué!*

On these private jealousies I will not dwell much, but I may observe that they came more across my notice from the fact that Sibyl, a half-foreigner and undeniably more charming than many of the natives, was a good deal exposed to them. I was often anxious, pained,

and indignant for her; but she winged her way delicately through all the mazes, the admiration, and at times the love, the envy and misrepresentation that threatened to entangle her way. She went past adoring glances and hands stretched out, half violence, half prayer, like a bird of Paradise safe in its charmed flight, or like a dove, which, with all its wayward, rapid flutterings, yet settles down on some light spray at last, so softly as not to loosen one petal even from a fading rose. To speak less poetically, she had a true, warm, home-loving heart of her own, and her joy in having me, her only sister, with her at last, gave her such a strength of security and indifference as made her, I almost thought, blind to what was going on around her.

I don't know how to describe the feeling which animated Madame de Fleury, whom I have described as something of a fairy-demon. She was, I believe, keenly jealous of Sibyl; the root of this jealousy was the fact that M. le Comte (now *fiancé* to her daughter) had begun by admiring my sister, and this was embittered by numberless other little triumphs of poor Sibyl's, of which she had been unconscious, or only pleased as a child may be with its own success. The *méchanceté* exhibited in conse-

quence was of a thoroughly French character, such as in its slighter forms is the light malice born of a vain heart, an acute brain, and a gay temper, relieving the tastelessness of perfect amiability, and deeping out amidst serious tenderness, even sublime devotion. It does not violate, though it checkers, friendship, and it at least refines the coarseness of enmity. Madame de Fleury was much too well-bred to exhibit enmity in its broader form; and as for Hermine, happy, admired, fêted little creature as she was, her vanity generally bore her along comfortably, and only permitted occasional *bouderies* and child-like impertinence.

Hermine had certainly some occasional justification for resentment, as far as regarded her cousin Émile, with whom she liked very much to flirt in a cousinly way, but who had a way of expressing his admiration of the *Anglaises* in phrases which seemed negatively to imply a want of those particularly admired qualities on the part of his countrywomen. One day, after he had left the room, and finished a panegyric on the fearless independence of Englishwomen, which he thought guarded them better than the most careful surveillance, Hermine exclaimed, rather petulantly, "My cousin may say what he likes; I can not contradict him,

for I know nothing about it. Je suis toute innocente," she added, with a most artless air; "je ne sais rien que je ne puisse dire."

And off she ran to play battledoor with her little brother, while Sibyl assured me that there was nothing at all really of the child about her. It is true Hermine was kept under that strict discipline the tendency of which is to produce either a characterless doll or a corrupted slave. But the French character, keen, intense, and vigorous, will burn like smothered fire under a coating of restraint which would stifle any other; and Hermine, who possessed a full share of the *esprit* of her race and sex, while patiently and cheerfully awaiting her day of development, was a very finished little being, on whose thorough exactness, harmony, and grace the eye and the mind could find pleasure in dwelling.

It is not wonderful that she should now and then pay back her countrymen's strictures with a hit at us. Sometimes she would patronize us and tell us we looked almost "Parisienne;" then, when a wicked fit was on her, she would jump up and imitate our style of walking and talking — not very exactly, I thought, though enough so to send both her mother and herself into fits of laughter. Her-

mine was fully persuaded, like most French-women, of her own infinite superiority in outward manners, which claim I used to let pass unquestioned, so as at least not to damage our character for politeness, or bring forward a new proof of our deplorable insular deficiency. Besides, I thought well enough of my own country-women on higher grounds, to be willing to let French women cherish in peace their little social glory.

English and French girls have probably a strong class-resemblance, in spite of national differences. Both, no doubt, are "ignorant and frivolous enough," as Mr. Bennett says in "Pride and Prejudice"—that is, very undeveloped and chaotic. In the English girl there is mostly a naturalness, which, in a shy nation like ours, often gives her manners a timid awkwardness, an abrupt sincerity, a something of coldness, but which in the higher natures often escapes in the shy expression of some deep feeling or idea, unconscious of its depth, coming softly and doubtfully from the bottom of the heart or mind, some high conception, rich in its very vagueness, simply expressed, yet wise in its simpleness, in which we discern the twilight that will brighten more and more to the perfect day.

But such as these are no doubt exceptional; as exceptional, perhaps, is the perfect type of the Frenchwoman, who to the brilliant grace and fascinating sweetness so universal among them adds the tenderness of soul, the refinement of feeling and intelligence, the delicate yet kindly penetration, and the playful lovingness, which make up a whole as near the ideal woman as any I have ever seen. That such Frenchwomen exist—charming alike without and within—I not only suspect, I know. God bless them! They are enough to ennoble a whole race.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARIS IN APRIL.

THE bright days of Paris are begun, and she looks like a young beauty dressed and decked out to receive the homage of a thousand lovers. Hitherto I have spoken only of salons and *soirées*, yet there was an outdoor and daylight life equally bewitching.

It is a blue, sunshiny April afternoon, and Sibyl and I look out from our lofty *troisième* on the bright city all alive and awake. Below us lie the Champs Élysées, with their ever-passing swarms like ants covering the shining pavement between the avenues of trees. How gay, open, and fresh every thing looked, from the Arc de Triomphe to the Rond Point! little was visible save wide, smooth, shady avenues, broad pavement, circling trees, and blue skies. There is Franconi's just before us, in a perfect *bosquet;* the chestnut-trees all round it, now dotted with soft, green buds, will in a month conceal it in a perfect veil of foliage. All the groups that pass below look neat and cheerful, move lightly and alertly, all are talking, smil-

ing, and bowing to each other, and wear that look of being so consciously *bien mis* that only the French rejoice in.

On the ground-floor of our house is a shop, where a great steam-engine constructs *gauffres* and *plaisirs* (a sort of light, crisp *pâtisserie*) all day long. On the bright pavement in front chairs are placed, where well-dressed family-groups sit and enjoy their cakes. How these French love to be out-of-doors! There enters a couple of ladies; it is my new friend, Mdlle. Aurélie, and her mother, come to make their luncheon of *gauffres;* she looks handsome, well-dressed, and quietly resolute as usual, when making her *courses en ville*. Considering that at eight o'clock in the morning they had their cup of coffee and *brioche*, at eleven their *déjeuner à la fourchette*, and will at six have their substantial dinner, and that they are now revelling in cakes, I think these French ladies, at least, need not deride the English for the number and solidity of their meals. Perhaps they will call—for the French, when they become intimate, make it a point of friendship never to pass your door without coming in; and a *bonne causerie* with Mademoiselle Aurélie is always welcome.

Sibyl is now busy arranging bunches of Par-

ma violets, which M. Émile has just brought her, in spite of my protest against the imperial flower. "Violets were created long before Louis Napoleon," says Émile. "And we won't let him have every good thing to himself," adds Sibyl. This settled, we go forth to enjoy more of this pleasant life. Close outside is a dense, unmoving ring, which has stood there all the afternoon, composed of workmen, women, and children, and those childish, idle soldiers of the line, with their short figures and boyish faces, around the ever-new, ever-delightful feats of some juggler, or tumbler, or dancing dog.

What varieties of human life there are in this promenade, becoming daily more crowded, the charming Champs Élysées! They extend from the honest *bourgeoise*, in large cap, coarse stuff gown, thick apron and immense pockets, accompanied by a clean, prim child, the countrywoman with her yellow-and-red-striped handkerchief round her head, the shabby, bearded men in blue blouses, and Republicans in conical caps, young and wicked-looking, to the handsome, staring dandies of all nations, old Orientals in a perfect robe of snow-white beard, soldiers, soldiers everywhere, and numbers of small, white, curly dogs held to-

gether in a leash, or following elegant women in all kinds of soft, beautiful velvets and furs. And the flower-women! they beset our way with fragrant snares; they offer, smiling and confidently (for well they know Sibyl's weakness), and with coaxing phrases and terms of endearment, lovely bouquets of violets and moss-roses. And there is the neat *bonne*, and children in enchanting little dresses, white hat and feather, braided white frock, and muff of snowy fur, as often as not talking English with their nurses.

The most remarkable among these street figures are, perhaps, the *méridionaux*, a race apart, which one soon learns to distinguish, who are very tall, often very handsome, in a dark, lurid style, with hard features, and physiognomies full of fierce fire. I almost shrink from those volcanic-looking men of the South.

We passed through the Place de la Concorde, and entered among the groves of the Tuileries gardens. Here spring was coming on fast; the white marble gods and goddesses, heroes, centaurs, fauns, and nymphs began to be enshrined, each in its own leafy bower. I looked back, and dazzling in sky and sunshine appeared the stately Place, with its guardian giant of an obelisk, strange talismanic-looking

columns towering in the middle; while the aërial-looking Arch of Triumph closed up the distance, like a dream, cut out in crystal, through which you see the pure azure background of sky. It looks like a vision, only that it never melts away.

And now we are in the Tuileries gardens, formal parterres, full of lilac-trees, that now are covered with purplish-brown clusters: one day more, and these buds will be hundreds of full pink fragrant flowers. As I approach the palace, I see a Municipal Guard, his back turned to me, with a broad yellow stripe across it, his bayonet fixed, his sword by his side, standing stock-still, and looking immovably up at the great stone lion on the right side of the entrance arch, with its foot on the globe and a look of imbecile sweetness. What does he think of it? He has seen it a thousand times already.

In a day or two there was a special excitement — the fête of Longchamps was to take place. This is the fête which the Parisians keep with the most pious ardor for three days of the "Semaine Sainte," its height being on Good-Friday. This "Semaine Sainte" is indeed a whirl of excitement, slightly differing in form, but not in nature, from the usual Paris

dissipation. Every day there is the perfection of church-music and church-oratory in the morning, and balls, operas, and theatres in the evening—and on Good-Friday especially there is first High Mass, last a Benedicite—and Longchamps between. This name is derived from a habit of the Paris *beau monde*, of a century or so ago, of repairing to a little chapel of that name in the Bois de Boulogne to perform their devotions. These devotions now consist in a continual promenade up and down the Champs Élysées in full dress, exhibiting new fashions and superb equipages. The worship continues, but it is transferred from God to Mammon.

The weather was beautiful; under the splendid sun and warm air the chestnut-trees rushed into preternatural bud and leaf, and all Paris swarmed over the sunny asphalt like so many spring butterflies. On each of these three days, at four o'clock, a stream of carriages begins to roll along the wide thoroughfare of the Champs Élysées; on the side are pedestrians, chiefly consisting of eye-glassed, bearded, and mustached men of all nations; and on the edge of the walk stand chairs for the more determined and indolent *flâneurs* in the broad sunshine between the two torrents of foot-pas-

sengers and carriages. In those dazzling carriages are high-dressed women, glittering like rainbows; between them caracole young men on horseback.

There among the pedestrians goes an Italian prince whom we know, walking in his usual style, his *lorgnon* in his eye, his chin supported by his stick held upright, his looks fixed on the skies in solemn vacancy. He neither sees nor wishes to see any one, for he comes from his usual afternoon visit to a French lady whom he admires; and one can judge by his air of solemn beatitude or listless gloom whether he has been admitted or not. In the present case he is evidently unwilling to efface the image in his mind by the sight of any meaner mortal.

Soon we fall in with a pale, light-haired young Englishman, somewhat a man of fashion, with an air half slangy, half military, who has lately broken a few bones in a steeplechase, and who, while waiting for his horse to join the sublime procession, condescends in a light quizzing tone to point out to us some of the most distinguished belles in the carriages. These we find (for the Second Empire has introduced many novelties in the way of *les mœurs*) are for the most part actresses of the

Palais Royal and such-like dashing dames, and, I must own, they looked their character. There in that low, light *coupé*, cushioned in its rich silk lining, thrown back on soft cushions, look at that young, graceful form, the rainbow parasol over the fairy bonnet, the face, of which one catches a side-view, dazzlingly handsome, with its strongly *crêpé* bands of black hair, its carmine brilliancy, and those dark eyes, with their sidelong, subtle, languishing glance, and lurking shut-up smile, and that mouth with its small, full, lovely lips. She sparkles all over with *esprit*, *espièglerie*, suppressed indications of angry passions, all armed in a bold, triumphant, scornful grace; or she wears perhaps a mask of demure reserve. But the hard, bold forehead, whence all the freshness of youth has been rubbed off, tells a truer tale. There was much food for compassionate melancholy in all this.

Our informant, perceiving his horse at last awaiting him, mounted, beginning to light and smoke his cigar before he had left us, which caused Sibyl involuntarily to exclaim, "What a snob!" The rest of the time we were joined by M. Émile, whose refined and clever conversation quite drew away my attention from the restless, yet monotonous scene before us. He

began by telling us that his official duties required from him every four weeks an attendance which kept him a close prisoner. "In truth, I am at the mercy of the changes of the moon."

"It is the type of your nation," said I.

"Comme Mademoiselle Béatrice nous fait la guerre!" he answered, with a smile of entire pleasure.

We talked a little of the passing scene, we compared French and English beauty, we agreed as to the metallic clearness and sharpness of the French physiognomy, "des traits délicats et durs, comme leur caractère." In a mild *dénigrant* tone he criticised the prominent foibles of his countrywomen. "Nevertheless," he said, "French women have more heart than French men. Some—perhaps the majority—have none at all; but those who have never love by halves. The result," he added, in lower and graver tones, "is almost always deplorable."

Then he turned as from a painful theme to the more welcome one of English women, who were contrasted on the same points with the French. First came their *droiture* of expression, the *naïveté* of their manners and conversation. It is true, this *droiture* often puzzles,

and this *naïveté* amuses; but in his heart, philosopher or no, the Frenchman considers *la coquetterie* a necessary feminine attribute, and the English simplicity and earnestness please him, as a fresher, and therefore more piquant, form of that *coquetterie* (I do not attempt to translate the word, for "coquetry" no way represents it). Then, warming into poetic feeling, M. Émile dwelt on the intellectual affection, the elevated purity, and the serene calm of us Englishwomen, adding, "It is angelic, as your fair hair and blue eyes," turning, as he spoke, to Sibyl, who certainly corresponded to his picture, but who only laughed at his idealizing eloquence.

It is the truth, as I believe, that most of this fine ideal was drawn from the fact that we abused the present ruler, took in "L'Avenir du Peuple" (a Republican journal quickly suffocated), and knew two or three languages: that was enough for a clever sentimental French generalizer.

In spite of ourselves, our talk wandered to deeper and sadder topics, and I saw, with pity, yet with pleasure, that our friend felt, as a high-minded man must feel, what I hesitated to call the political and social degradation of his nation. His face changed, his voice sank

and deepened as he uttered a few bitter, broken sentences. By way of excuse, I said, "I can not imagine how a brave and proud nation like yours could submit to such abasement."

"There is the misfortune," he answered; "we have not pride enough. We are not proud, we are vain; and there is a vast difference between these two qualities."

Sibyl gravely, but rather maliciously, told him of an engraving she had that day seen in a print-shop, entitled, "La Clémence du Président," illustrating an incident at a review the day before. It represented a young lady kneeling to Louis Napoleon, with a petition for her condemned brother; he bows stiffly, and — hands the petition over to an aid-de-camp! M. Émile was silent for a moment; then he muttered, "What an abomination! I should like to make sure of it."

One was, indeed, disposed to wonder at the slough of humiliation (and no one who was not then in Paris can tell how deep it was) through which a fiery and powerful nation had permitted itself to be dragged, to repose at last under the heel of an armed tyranny. But day by day we received sad proofs of so vast a want of pure public feeling, especially in the public

men, that one was at last obliged to cease wondering. Nevertheless, one can not quite despair for France when there are yet such men as Émile in it — men whose warm heart and vivid imagination unite with a clear head and straightforward sense of duty. Perhaps one regrets that these men have not protested still more by acts; but I do not know the difficulties, and can not judge. I *do* know those who have quietly barred forever all advance in their professional career by a vote against the Coup d'État; others who, in a public chair, when the Empire had just set down its triumphant foot, distinctly renewed their confession of faith; and others, who abandoned their sole means of livelihood rather than condescend even to an acquiescent silence, and went forth impoverished exiles to foreign lands.

In spite, then, of a general want of moral courage, a too exclusive devotion to gain, and to that order and tranquillity which insures gain, a *blasé* indifference, as of men just recovered from a fever-fit, to the abused terms of law and liberty, whence sprang, I suppose, that "Oui" of seven millions—in spite of all, I would fain do justice to the saving trait of the French character — a chivalry of feeling resulting from that exquisite sensibility which

makes their souls respond, like a finely-strung instrument, to every beautiful touch; this gives a captivating charm to their generosity, a romance to their friendship, a touching sweetness to their love.

Thus we conversed—with only occasional interludes, such as a piece of rudeness from a French lady, who refused to move an inch to relieve Sibyl from a painful pressure, whereon we were warned never to ask a favor of a French lady in a public place—till we went home, and Émile took leave of us to begin his week of invisibility, adding, in pathetic tones, "Pity the poor prisoner."

And so, I reflected, on quitting Longchamps, to be where the *monde* congregates, to exhibit new dresses and criticise one's neighbors, to lounge for hours together on a fine day in the open air, perfectly idle, eyes and tongue in full play, amidst dust, heat, and enormous noise—this is life for a Parisian. We, being there in the character of philosophical observers, were not open to our own criticism.

This being, however, nearly all the philosophy I could extract from this famous scene, I went to a very different one—vespers in Notre-Dame; one of those scenes where the Roman Catholic religion wooes us through heart

and senses with every devotional luxury. The organ, out of which seas of triumphant music rolled, then died suddenly, that one lovely tenor might fill the silence and make all forgotten save itself, then joined in again, with gasping fragments and tremulous sighs, till all ran, twisted, melted together into one cry of rapture; the vision of fifty white-robed female forms gliding all round the church, behind the Virgin's silken banner, like a dream of nuns; the procession of the Host, with its tall tapers and its tinkling bell; then the picture of the rich altar, flower-garlanded and forested with a hundred lights, and on the altar-steps all those priestly forms then knelt, as in a picture, in robes of black and white and gold-embroidered crimson, the only movement being the censer swung now and then slowly on high, and filling the church with clouds of rich perfume. The delicious choral singing, that inspired me with profound sadness like the prolonged prayer of the despairing, ever more and more earnest, and ever in vain! Then the deepening twilight, in which all seemed to float off into air; then one grand crash of music, at which the procession swept out by a side-door, the altar-lights were extinguished, and half the church left in a divine darkness.

We went home; and I could but hope that the worshippers believed in it all, and that each movement, each genuflexion, each lifting of the Host, was to them a sacred act. To me, who believe in a spiritual, not a material Deity, the whole appeared theatrical and pagan, in spite of an effect that I could not but feel, of which half was upon the senses, half upon the imaginative emotions.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LUXEMBOURG AND THE CONCIERGERIE.

I HAVE already mentioned the Comte de T——, one of Sibyl's most frequent visitors, though his projected marriage with Hermine, it was expected, would soon take place. Of the latter lady and her mother I have said little, because we saw little. Their circle of society was very different from ours; their days were spent in the *grand monde* and in the incessant exertions of what is called pleasure. For this sort of life Sibyl had neither health nor inclination; she loved to be amused, but in a quiet way, and preferred a small circle of chosen and agreeable friends to indiscriminate gayety on a large scale.

This easy mode of intercourse seemed very agreeable, too, to many of her acquaintances, among others to the Comte de T——, whose intimacy permitted him to pursue it without (I suppose) endangering his interests with Hermine, who on her part seemed perfectly content with his business-like courtship of herself.

He is said to be one of the last of the good talkers of Paris, and certainly is an excellent specimen of the manners of the old school. He has not even "fine" manners—they are too calm and unobtrusive for that; he is only very agreeable; rather plain, with a quiet arch twinkle in his eye, and a voice of the laziest enjoyment. One afternoon he came to us, bringing two bunches of roses and a proposal of a visit to the Luxembourg gardens—and the lilacs there—and the Conciergerie. It was rather before the time of lilac-blossom; but perhaps, with an aristocratical magnificence worthy of Louis XIV.'s time, M. de T—— thought he could control nature by way of a *galanterie* to *ces dames*, and so it was arranged. Hermine was included in the party, and he was content and I very much amused.

Sibyl was not over-well that day, and Hermine, for some reason, slightly out of humor, but neither difficulty could interrupt the even and happy flow of M. de T——'s spirits nor stop his conversation, which he dealt out pretty equally to all three. His "hommage aux dames," which is expressed in pleasantry tempered by respect, is of a thorough, genuine, unremitted kind, unlike that of many modern young men, an effort of flirtation with one in-

dividual, or for a single *soirée;* his devotion extended to all women, and lasted all his life.

We arrived at the Conciergerie, and the *greffier* showed us over it. To my surprise, M. de T—— had never had the curiosity to visit it before, and scarcely even knew the present use of it, which is for the detention of those awaiting trial. These gay *grands seigneurs* have a very narrow world of interest; still it surprised me in M. de T——, because he is supposed to be an intense Legitimist; however, I don't think he troubles himself much who rules in Paris, or honors Louis Napoleon with more than a quiet joke or a little domestic scandal.

We entered by that gloomy old archway where the prisoners of the Terror passed on tumbrils to the guillotine, and thence came into the Salle, old as the time of Louis IX., dark and cold, the ceiling supported by immense massive ribs, the walls of mediæval strength and thickness. Then we went into the cell of Marie Antoinette, a spot which touched me profoundly, and impressed even M. de T—— with the solemn feeling of its melancholy and, for him, humiliating associations.

The room has been much altered; but low,

dark, dreary it still is, only twelve feet by ten, yet curtained off into two divisions, one of which just held the poor queen's bed; the other contained her guards, who never quitted her day or night, or lost sight of her, save at her toilet. A sorrowful picture at the end shows us the poor forlorn woman, who has ceased to struggle, ceased almost to feel, perhaps even to pray, sitting on her low pallet just beneath the small iron-barred hole high in the wall, which supplied the place of a window. Two more pictures represent the parting with her friends and the last confession. An altar has been raised with a monumental inscription, which M. de T—— read through with silent devotion; on it stands the crucifix which Marie Antoinette always used. It is easy, and in some sense just, to talk of the crimes and follies of the old *régime* and the necessity of destroying it, of the righteous vengeance of an oppressed people, and the glorious fruit of the great Revolution, and easy to say that the sufferings of a queen are not to be pitied more than those of a working-woman; but human nature, while not hardened, has in it sympathetic emotions which will be touched more keenly in proportion as the individual case of suffering is brought more vividly be-

fore us, and will feel how that suffering is enhanced by a sense of sudden and utter *fall.* It will, too, distinguish between the guilt of those who were but what they were born to, necessarily unable to shake off the prejudices they had been cradled in, and all unknowing how to meet the new, strange circumstances, a world in chaos, wildly raging against them, and those deliberate malefactors who, for their own selfish purposes, turn disorder into carnage and slavery. Nor will the calmer judgment—in the long, unnecessary system of ignoble persecution and horrible vengeance inflicted on powerless victims—see any thing to the credit of the heroes of the Revolution and their loudly proclaimed principles of freedom, patriotism, and brotherhood.

Sibyl, who had vainly struggled against illness all day, became so faint that we were obliged to leave the place and seek fresh air. The lively *greffier* asked "if the impressions of the place were too much for madame," saying that this often happened when people visited it for the first time. As we passed out, we took a look at the room where criminals sentenced to death were placed the night before their execution. Oh me! it was a dreadful place! so stony cold, so black, so pitilessly

strong, so utterly forlorn! Even M. de T—— shuddered, and said it was "assombrissant."

Then to the Luxembourg gardens, where we all strolled up and down the terrace, now shady with trees, sat on a bench beneath them, looked at the lilac-trees (the blossoms were so disobliging as to remain yet buds), and enjoyed the smiling, shining day. But certainly it did not much signify where we were or what we saw; for M. le Comte came there evidently to talk and fascinate us, not to let us see any thing. He pointed to the Hall of the Luxembourg, and gave us his reminiscences of the conflicts of June in '48, all in such a genuine Faubourg St. Germain manner that I had a double enjoyment.

"There," he said, "we had to sleep all night on beds of straw. I was one of the National Guard, and was called out with about a hundred more to protect the palace from the insurgents. It was on the fourth night, and there was still a dense mass roaring all round, from the Panthéon to the Hotel de Ville. We heard cannonading and musketry going on all night, and knew, though it was too dark to see, that there was a ferocious multitude outside thirsting for our blood, who might massacre us in the dark, before we could even see

them: it was not a pleasant idea." But he shrugged his shoulders much more, and dwelt with much greater sensibility on the personal discomforts than on the horrors and dangers of that bivouac-night.

"At last," said he, "at about three o'clock in the morning, we were called out on a sudden alarm—the insurgents were going to attack us. We were hurried out into the court, formed hastily, ordered to load; as for me, I knew nothing about that business, and I don't believe many of my companions did, although some of them had been twenty years in the National Guard. I found myself, therefore, much embarrassed by the order to load with cartridge. I turned to my next neighbor, and asked if by any chance he knew how to load. 'Yes,' said he. 'Then will you be so obliging as to load mine for me?' 'With the greatest pleasure,' he replied. And oh how relieved I was! But no doubt we were more dangerous to our friends than to our enemies. There we stood drawn up in the dark, on a cold, wet night, no moon, no lamps, nothing but the pale stars overhead, expecting every instant to engage. But after some hours' waiting we were told that the barricade was taken, and that we were no longer required. We were very glad

to get home, putting, no doubt, the just value on our services."

He then described the aspect of Paris when he walked out next morning, the boulevards a perfect solitude, the houses in ruins, in some of the more distant streets, where the fighting had been fiercest, the blood flowing like water. He described the furious passions of both parties, the horrid, demoniac aspect of the insurgents, the remorseless rage of those who got the better, in which all justice, all generosity, all pity, seemed flung to the winds. "Nevertheless," said he, "I believe I was the chief means of saving one man's life. He had fired at an officer of the National Guard and wounded his man; he was instantly seized, dragged into the Luxembourg gardens, and numberless furious voices demanded his instant death. I put up my *lorgnon* and was interested by his appearance. He was a very tall young man, with a mass of waving hair, black beard and mustache, and a pale, stern, determined face; he was not an *ouvrier;* he wore a black coat, very threadbare, and shabby trowsers; he was probably an artist of enthusiastic Republican principles. I thought it a pity that he should be killed, and I made them a speech. I told them that they were now excited; that what

they felt now they would not feel a month, a week, a day hence; that it was a shocking thing to kill a man in a state of excitement, which resembled intoxication, and left no time for the operation of reason; that, after all, he had not committed murder, that he had only wounded a man, and that death was too dreadful a penalty for this. Enfin que sais-je? J'ai dit tant de belles choses. About half a dozen persons agreed with me, and joined in trying to save the man; the passions of the others then turned against us, and we were for a while in some danger. Meanwhile the young man stood in the midst, towering head and shoulders above the rest, and looking down on us with calm indifference, as if all this was not his affair at all. At last we got him into another room, where we locked him up, and by this respite finally saved him. I believe he was afterwards tried, but certainly not put to death—probably transported."

Having told all this little episode (which by-the-bye did him much credit) in a well-bred, indifferent way, M. de T——, in precisely the same manner, glided into his favorite quiet badinage, chiefly addressed to Mademoiselle Béatrice as the *étrangère*, mixed with dissertations on love and matrimony as practiced in

England and France. Having put down two of the ladies at their own door, he accompanied the third to a house some way farther on, politely observing that he only wished it was farther still, and proposing first to take a turn or two in the Champs Élysées, which, as it was then most gayly crowded and we were in a common *fiacre*, was a courageous proposition on the part of M. le Comte, and such as would scarcely have been made by an English man of fashion. The young lady, doubting how far the public promenade in the cab with a *grand seigneur* would please *les mœurs* in a French point of view, declined, and so ended our day.

CHAPTER X.

PARIS IN MAY.

WE have now a succession of blue, dry, burning days, which fill the Champs Élysées with dust and gay crowds; a haze of heat rests on the air, the bridges, the domes and steeples on the other side. The fountains send light silver clouds into the turquoise air; organs, dancing dogs, tumblers, and Punch abound; the *limonadiers* go about with their tinkling bell, the lemonade or sherbet-making machine strapped to their backs and the metal drinking-vessels in front. The crowds of chairs under the trees are filled by lounging newspaper readers; the little tables are set in front of the wine-shops, with wine, coffee, lemonade, and ginger-beer thereon.

One May-day I well remember. It had been sunny, hot, sultry, and we had kept within doors, purposing to pay a quiet, pleasant evening visit at the end, and finish with a moonlight stroll in the Bois de Boulogne. But the still, glaring day gave signs of ending in storm; the hot sky drew over itself a veil

of thick gray cloud, then came slowly down great, ponderous, silent drops of rain. I looked into the court, which began to wake up to its evening life; it was a large and handsome quadrangle inclosed by regular buildings. On the side opposite us the *rez-de-chaussée* consisted of stables and coach-houses; above were the low, wide, entresol windows; then three stages of handsome *appartements*, and the attic windows at the top with flower-pots on the ledges, and canary-cages, covered each with a cool green leaf from the sun. All the neat white *persiennes* are flung back and the windows open; sounds of life are constantly heard. On the *rez-de-chaussée*, in one part billiards have been going on for hours; sometimes musical bells or glasses tinkle their pretty tunes. Towards the evening, screaming voices, laughter, and singing announce revels of no refined sort as going on on the lower story; while in the handsome rooms above, the folding windows thrown wide open display a cheerful blaze of lamps and a bright little party clustered at dinner.

Yes, in this house, as in all others, the human history, chapter by chapter, is being read, low or loud, listened to or not, as it may be. All are strangers to each other, and yet here

and there stray words of that history sound startlingly across our path. On the floor below us resides a duc, of ancient lineage, and of overflowing wealth; he has a wife, a daughter by a first marriage, and a son by the second. The day we entered a domestic fête was going on; it was the daughter's wedding-day. Her husband, strange to say, was her own choice, she being of age, of independent mind and independent fortune. He was a baron, an excellent young man, and with a good property, but the match was not splendid enough for her haughty father, and he would not honor it with his sanction or his presence. So he staid at Rome, where he has long resided without his wife.

A few, a very few carriages assembled in the court as the wedding-party set forth. We saw the bride come forth with her stepmother and the two take their place together. The stepmother looked young and kind and good; the bride was more striking than pretty, a pale, calm face, with an expression in it of courage and will — perhaps not unneeded. She was magnificently dressed, but greatly scandalized the French female spectators by her scarlet and gold-embroidered scarf; she was at once concluded "originale." There was no splen-

dor of any kind, and the wedding was pronounced a "triste affaire;" but I hope the brave young woman, who thus followed the dictates of her heart and reason, found her happiness in that chateau of hers in Normandy whither she was going to reside with her bridegroom.

The next little occurrence that brought the ducal family before us was a very peaceful one. We had, by word of mouth, instructed our clever *cuisinière* how to make a true English plum-pudding; she had turned out one success, and was making another. The fame of it (the spiritual perfume, as it were) had spread through the hotel, and one morning I found in our kitchen the smart *femme de chambre* of Madame la Duchesse, for whom her mistress had begged permission to watch the growth of the foreign wonder. We sent a portion of the result to the lady, to satisfy her as to its merits.

And now another kind of solemnity has taken place there. I was wakened at midnight by shriek upon shriek rising from below; they were the cries of the duchess over the dead body of her son. He was her only child, and the heir of all that wealth and that historic title; a boy of nineteen, gentle and amiable, his mother's darling, and, I fear, like

most such high-born darlings, too little watched or controlled in the rapid rush of his Parisian life. He had become consumptive, and a galloping decline had in a month brought all his bloom of youth to the grave. The poor mother at the moment of his death was in her own room; on hearing the news, she tore herself wildly from those who would have held her, and, leaving a fragment of her dress in their hands, flew like a mad woman to the corpse. And the father? He was at Rome? he had not chosen to come when recalled on account of his son's illness, and now they telegraphed to him the news of death.

Next day, on descending into the court to go out, we saw there the hearse waiting to be taken out. The *drap mortuaire*—a white one, to signify that the dead was unmarried, with his initial "C" embroidered on it—hung all over the *porte-cochère*, so that we should have had to lift it up to pass out. We were warned not to do so till the bier was removed, or we should be considered *ridicules*. A priest prayed kneeling by the bier, and in the afternoon we saw the funeral procession moving away; among the mourners walking after the poor boy's bier we recognized our old friend M. de Montorgueil.

We strolled one day, a little before sunset, into the Tuileries gardens. The chestnut-trees, like palaces all magnificent with flowers, were illuminated by the sun into so much shimmering, twinkling, green and gold drapery, while behind, arch after arch of foliage looked like pieces cut out of rich green velvet. The fountain of the large reservoir in the middle was in full play, and the great column of spray, with its waving arch, was all colored from clear silver into bright smoke. The drops, as they fell off from the curve, shivered into sparkling gems, like stars struck off from a haze of light. All the windows of the long Tuileries front were dipped in fire by the setting sun opposite, the Arch of Triumph stood out before the orange west with the sunset molten on its fairy architecture, while the moon was just lifting her foam-white crescent over the shining curves of the Seine.

"Let us go and call on Madame Rénaud," said Sibyl. "Aurélie will like to walk in the Tuileries gardens with us, all the more that it is not often that she gets out without that good mother of hers." Horace (our grave English cousin, who was then with us) made no objection, and we went to the Rue d'Aguesseau, where Madame de Rénaud received us

kindly, but told us poor Aurélie was too ill to go out. She had been ailing some time, she did not know why. At last Aurélie came in to us, but she was terribly changed. That spiritless melancholy was very unlike her usual ready, decided, almost superbly patronizing manner; and there was an increased but varying brilliancy in her usually pale complexion, which reminds one that she is, as I fear, *pulmonique*. What ails poor Aurélie? I know nothing of her secrets, but I have noticed lately a troubled look in her large black eyes, which, joined to her serious, unyouthful manner, seems to me—a girl in my teens—to tell the story of a heart that has felt warmly and suffered much. Horace admires her, I know; they seem to have a sort of silent understanding with each other, for he is too shy and too unversed in French to enter on much conversation; but he manages to talk with his eyes, and she, with her grand, gracious manner, knows how to draw him out. There is nothing whatever on her part but a sort of patronizing kindness, quite consistent with a heart already occupied; on his, I suspect, there is something more.

Aurélie was at length induced to accompany us into the Tuileries gardens. The sun

had set, and we sat chiefly on a retired stone bench in the mingled shade of beech and chestnut. In those stately groves and walks, now darkening with twilight, there was a sumptuous gloom, a languid, luxurious beauty, which defied expression, but which, if it found melancholy in the heart, was sure to deepen it. Sentimental themes were dangerous; so we tried some of those fruitful topics which form ready battle-fields between French and English, and found how safe and pleasant those fearful materials of eternal political bitterness, those vexed, burning questions of statesmen, become when handled with the cheerful superficiality of friendly young men and women.

Aurélie is very decided in the expression of her opinions, and amused me by her confident assertions, and even contradictions, about ways and manners in England, where she has never been. We talked of what at that moment was almost the only "household word"—"Uncle Tom's Cabin." She boldly avowed herself an advocate of negro slavery, alleging that all the English supposed philanthropic exertions for its abolition were simply dictated by a desire to ruin *their* colonies. But then she turned smilingly to Horace, who was looking dumb

and dreadfully scandalized at her assertions, and confessed that they were made with a deliberate intention to "faire naître une guerre" between us. I have observed that the tone of the French feeling is very much below that of the English on this subject;* they seem never to have forgiven the revolt of the blacks in San Domingo. Toussaint is with them not a hero to be admired, but an ignorant barbarian to be laughed at.

"There is one thing," said Aurélie suddenly to me, when Sibyl and Horace were otherwise occupied, "in which I give you all advantage; it is in the position of your young women with regard to love and matrimony. The English marry always for love, and not for money—is it not so?"

I did not like to disenchant my French friend of this fair belief, or I might have answered, "Not always." But it happens often enough to justify the theory, that at any rate an Englishman is *supposed* to marry for love; so that, even if he does select a lady for her fortune, he pays her the compliment of seeming to seek her for herself.

* This was written before the civil war in America, when the "domestic institution" became suddenly such a favorite with the English press and "genteel" society.

I talked about the engagement of a young lady of my acquaintance, in which I felt amiably interested. "She tells me M. de H. loves her," I said, and was proceeding with some romantic statement, when Mdlle. Aurélie interrupted me by throwing herself back in her seat with a fit of laughter, as she exclaimed, "All these are pretty *contes* which nobody believes; every body knows that there is no love whatever in these sort of marriages. It is simply an affair of business; Mdlle. Gabrielle has 30,000 francs, and M. de H. nothing—consequently it is the utmost simplicity to believe that the desire of her fortune was not the predominant feeling."

I was startled, and betrayed it.

"Nonsense! You must look on these things from a different point of view in France," said Aurélie. Then she went on to recapitulate the history of various love affairs—if the word can be so used—among our acquaintance, and described how more than one charming Frenchman, whom we knew, was coquetting with some charming girl or other, paying her devoted attentions perhaps for a whole year; in love, yes, very much in love — up to any amount save that of breaking his heart or offering his hand. And, then, presently it will

be another young lady, also lovely and ineligible, till, when he has exhausted all the pleasures of this butterfly career, he makes, calmly and leisurely, a mercenary match. Frenchmen generally marry late. "They love," as one of them sentimentally said to me, "to gather first all the flowers of life."

When I expressed my wonder at the really cold hearts that these professedly enthusiastic Frenchmen must have to carry on this system, she again dismissed the remark with a cool, contemptuous laugh.

"*I* do not mean to yield to it," she observed at length. "I will at least have *du goût* for the person I marry."

"Taste is not enough," ventured I; "you ought to love the man."

"Oh, as for that," she returned, in a cold, calm tone, which I nevertheless fancied much at variance with her expression, "I can dispense with a *grande passion;* it causes nothing but unhappiness. I suppose once in life such a thing is inevitable; but once is enough."

"But you must not think," she added, presently, "that all marriages in France are these cold, mercenary affairs. There *are*, especially in the country, such things as matches originating in an affection which begins in youth

and lasts till age. My own father and mother were instances of this; they were Protestants of the south of France, and had loved each other all their lives. But Paris is not the place in which to look for any thing good." Then, rising suddenly from her seat to resume our promenade, she said, in a brief energetic tone, "Les hommes de Paris sont détestables."

Horace escorted Mdlle. Aurélie home; and Sibyl and I, turning back to our own quarters, were joined by a friend, a tall French artist of daring cleverness, a jolly, good-humored, *sans-souciant* character, with plenty of amusing, slap-dash conversation. He was the professed and determined adorer of most of the agreeable women he knew, and, whether successful or not, contrived to keep his spirits up, and paint away energetically all the time. He was tall and vigorous in form, with keen iron-gray eyes and a determined mouth. Horace called him an "old file;" and, with all his good-humor, I suspect there was something of hard iron, as well as of keen, biting steel, in him.

Scarcely had we entered than a ring at the door-bell announced another guest, and in came M. de Montorgueil, with his precise figure, neat gray head, silvery imperial, and thin, clear, sharp voice. With some doubts as to

French proprieties, I introduced our guests to each other. I had no doubt then that M. le Duc (who, by-the-bye, is a professed Republican) considered the artist as too much *canaille* for his acquaintance. Misled, perhaps, by the introducer's pronunciation, M. Madier mistook the name.

"Monsieur is the Duc de M——."

"Non, monsieur, De Montorgueil," was the cold, dry answer, and not a word more did he vouchsafe him. M. de Montorgueil then presented me with a copy of a work of his, which is to convert me to Romanism and to his political dreams. He was also occupied in improving his acquaintance with a fair young English friend of ours whom he has once met at our house. "Ces vieux grands seigneurs," says a shrewd old lady friend of ours, "passent la vie à papillonner autour des demoiselles." "She is very spirituelle," he said; this, from a Frenchman, means "she is very pretty." "Would her family consider it a breach of etiquette if he were to call? He did not know English usages; he referred himself to us." He was assured that he might call, which he did, inquiring of Horace, whom he met at the door, if "*elle*," without any other distinguishing mark, was at home, and, finding that she

was not, and that they were just leaving Paris, conveyed to her "les adieux du cœur."

After settling these important matters, our patrician visitor departed, and the artist consoled himself by abusing him in a hearty, cheerful way. Meanwhile, it was such a beautiful summer night that we went forth once again to see the fairy capital in its last, strangest, most bewitching phase. The artist walked forth with us; he was in a would-be sentimental mood, about as comical as the "jolly" style more usual to him, which, as it was, broke out from time to time. He rallied, complimented, joked, and laughed aloud; then, heaving a huge sigh, would smite his chest and say, "Ah, pauvre nègre!" and protest that he was "malheureux comme une pierre." I suppose one of his numerous *affaires de cœur* was in an unprosperous stage.

Paris was changed now; where by day was a great crowded city, all seemed dark with forest; the Place de la Concorde was marked only by its guardian giant of an obelisk, dim and tall in the centre, while figures like phantoms crossed over its vast smooth field of pavement turned by the moonlight to snow. The fountains in the Tuileries gardens rose against the solid black marble of the night air in soft

clouds of magical foam, and fell again on each side like liquid lace, like a watery bride-veil. Those myriad lights in the great square began their fantastic many-figured dance above, beyond, and across each other; then gathered, as it were, and shot forth along the Champs Élysées in double glittering lines that suddenly seemed to converge and close in a bright point at the Arch of Triumph. Along the river glittered a file of stars, reflected like a succession of pillared arches, of lighted-up houses in the water, whose dark bosom appeared actually expanding into a lake. Look still—the banks appear receding from each other—the bounds melt suddenly away as the basin of water spreads. It is a moving picture, a Fata Morgana.

The city grew yet more joyous as night came on, and now the *cafés chantants* came into play. These are small gay tribunes painted white and gilded, placed close to the cafés, among the trees, where public singers began early in the evening, and sang on half the night long. Strange, sparkling world of Paris, where the voice of pleasure ceases not day or night, and every thing is tricked out like a pageant or plaything!

As we strayed slowly along we stopped to

listen to a clear and powerful warbling poured out on the soft summer night. The singers are young women, *aspirantes* probably for a rôle at the opera, and making themselves known the while on a stage nearer by many steps to their original position in life. One or two sat in evening dress on the steps of the tribune, waiting; they fingered their ringlets, arranged their ribbons, tossed their bouquets, and flung side glances into the crowd, where the givers of these bouquets probably stood.

Soon one rose to sing, a girl in a white muslin dress with a broad, rose-colored sash; her voice was sweet and well-trained, her face young and pretty, and there was a smile on her lips. Was it fancy, or that instinct of discernment that comes sometimes like an inspiration, that saw in those violet eyes and on that pale, passionate face deep shadows of despair, and wild, wandering lights of something yet worse, that saw the fixed smile become a sneer of scorn at the world and at herself, who each knew each other only too well? Perhaps her thoughts glanced from the time when, an innocent peasant-child, she ran by her mother's side to join her companions at the *Fête-Dieu*, and, for the first time, with them flung flowers before the curé going to mass, looking first to

see how the others did it—to the future day when she might be lounging in a gay *calèche* among the brilliant groups of Longchamps—and which picture would seem to her the wildest illusion?

But when she finished, when the wild, sad notes were over, she sat down, settling her dress, and shaking her flounces with a vain and jaunty air, then glanced a bold glance at the audience, said something to one of her companions, and smiled.

Then slipped out on the steps a lanky little girl, with long, bare arms, short frock, and springy feet; she treats us to a prematurely pert and practiced look, sings saucily a low, comic song, and pantomimes at the audience. What an actress she will be in time! I have surely seen her twin-sister as the child-heroine of "La Maman Sablonneur." The profits of the concern are made by the *consommations* which are expected from those who have taken their seats, and of which the tariff is handed round to them.

We walked on to enjoy one last, most perfect picture, from the high platform opposite the Bridge of Jena, with the Champ de Mars below us. There it lay at our feet, a dream-Paris, an illuminated world, all bright in the

darkness, the Seine curling like a milk-white serpent between its dazzling banks, the clusters of lights that marked out places, avenues, public buildings, the bridges like so many pathways of stars, the domes and spires piercing sombre through the blue night air.

I mused, as we re-entered, on the chiaroscuro of this strange Paris, how inextricably bound with every one of its witcheries was a sting, a pang, a suspicion of something one shrank from. Is it so, then, that the bright veil of this Parisian life is a gay curtain so painted with joyous scenes and figures as to look solid, but the moment you stop to regard it, in spite of its waving play, you perceive that it is full of holes and tatters, underneath which are darkness and corruption, which once discovered, you see no more the splendor, only the holes and tatters, and the dismal reality behind?

CHAPTER XI.

A FRENCH COUNTRY HOUSE.

IT may be guessed from my last words that we were not very sorry when the time came at which all Paris turns out and spends in the country as much of its summer as it can resign itself to wasting in that way. We, for our parts, were heartily glad to be out of the noise, heat, and glare of that excited and exciting world; but it did not suit us to move very far. However, we forbore to imitate the generality of our friends, who could not prevail on themselves to go farther than the Lac d'Enghien and Montmorenci, and, establishing themselves in a colony in some gay hotel or boarding-house, lead a life as much like that of their dear Paris as possible; their exercise confined to promenades in the garden and very moderate picnics; their amusements to dancing, singing, and perpetual gossip and flirtation. Thus they spend their time of genteel exile, and hasten gladly back again when fashion permits. Some, no doubt, there are who go to watering-places, or even as far as the

Pyrenees, to the Eaux Chaudes, or Luchon, but mostly aiming to combine society and amusement with health.

No, we really wished to bury ourselves in the country, and we did it. We spent six months in a quiet village and a secluded country-house, which, although only a few miles beyond Versailles, was so little visited or known of, that a dweller there asked us how we came to find out this *pays perdu*.

The house, called Les Rosiers, stands in a tiny hamlet of the same name; the village proper lies in the valley below. Our house, approached at the front by the small rude street, stands on a height, encircled with woods, green prairies, and orchards, where the eye steals through all the near greenness into charming vistas of more distant rock, or dell, or forest.

We enter through a great shabby wooden gate in a stone wall, amidst the barking of dogs, and are charmed at once with our new domain. We find ourselves in a large walled garden or court, half smothered in trees; a large unshaven lawn in the centre, with a group of noble walnut-trees on it; all around a gravel-walk edged with orange-trees and oleanders in full blossom, the inclosing walls

overgrown with vines and other straggling fruit-trees; all down one side a set of offices which are nothing but picturesque rubbish, a long, low, uneven line of crumbling stone cottages, one of which is inhabited by the gardener, who is also *concierge*, with his wife and his little son and daughter.

Through all this we reach the house—once an old convent of the Bernardines—built all of stone, constructed for strength and warmth, as one sees by the thickness of the walls, the solid beams, and the double doors, though, in the usual French style, all is clumsily put together and ill secured. But the long, low, façade of white stone that presents itself across the waving grass and walnut-boughs, and all the green picturesque confusion, how charming it is, with its tiled roof, stained green and yellow with moss; its wide upper windows with their white *persiennes;* the ground-floor windows, long and large, with their great wooden whitewashed shutters flung back against the wall, opening on the gravel-walks, and the orange-trees in rows! On the other, the north side, is a still wilder, greener garden, one scene of rural confusion, full of limes, catalpas, acacias, laburnums, a wilderness of blossoming foliage, and a very kingdom of song-birds. We

descend, by a succession of slopes, through paths almost hidden in the thickets of lilac, syringa, and honey-suckle, down mossy stone steps, through a little open gate in a low wall masked by copses of Spanish chestnut and hornbeam, till at last, passing through a gap in a hawthorn hedge, we quit these romantic grounds, and find ourselves at the top of an orchard or prairie, descending among its scattered fruit-trees into the valley basin below, where, across meadow-ranges, lies half seen the village with its tiny river, while the red, wood-covered rocks spring up, a sudden boundary, on the other side.

The orchard is inclosed on three sides by low walls, dividing it from rich, luxuriant, grassy, flowery prairies; on the west an aqueduct rises, at the end of the valley, out of a thick background mass of forests towards Bue and Viroflay, with tempting paths winding through it, all delicious for summer loitering. This orchard slope will become dear to us, I foresee, with its thick woods, and smiling meadows all ready for the mower, the air echoing with happy sounds, the cuckoo's soft voice breathing out every minute from the copses around, bees humming their self-congratulations among the clover, yellow trefoil,

large ox-eyed daisies, poligulas pink and blue, blue salvias, and other flowers new to us, which enamel the slope, and all fragrant with the balmy blossom of the trees. All here is still, though about the premises those shrill French tongues are forever going, in accompaniment to their cheerful domestic activity.

But for the house itself, of which we have taken the *rez-de-chaussée:* it is large, straggling, and airy, full of doors and windows, and with numberless rooms. The large hall, drawing-room, and dining-room are very pleasant; the glass doors of the hall and the large windows at each end of the drawing-room let us see into both gardens filled with waving trees; the stone benches just outside the windows are our favorite seat.

We took, as I said, the *rez-de-chaussée* and the *premier*, the latter containing five charming bedrooms. Our party consisted of Sibyl and myself, Sibyl's baby-girl, with her English nurse, and our excellent *bonne*, Honorine; also of Cousin Horace, who was to be a frequent guest. The rest of the house—a cross-piece running out from the main body, and a hexagonal conical-topped tower in the middle—was either not tenanted, or only transiently, by a few passing lodgers, or by the *propriétaire*

and his wife, who came down from Paris from time to time to look after their affairs. As for the society of this deeply secluded neighborhood, there was a rich banker's fine house and grounds a mile or so off, but the family were never there; there was a charming family of quiet people, half French, half Swiss, in the little village; the curé, whose brother was the village tailor; and a world of peasantry, small farmers, almost all more or less land-holders, masons, etc. But of these, though highly amusing people, whose various histories were a source of constant interest, I am not now going to speak. My present business is only with the little world within the country house.

A few days of intense quiet Sibyl and I enjoyed at the beginning, when, the first little troubles of installment over, under the energetic management of Honorine, we could wander from shine to shade among leaves and birds and all dream-like things, or occupy the seat under the walnut-tree at the top of the prairie, with our feet in the long grass, our eyes fixed on that little green bit out of the great pastoral spread out around us, our talk on sad sweet things with which that scene, till then so strange, will henceforth be inextricably intertwined. For we had come to a passage in our

lives which would necessarily leave bitter-sweet memories through years to come; and yet we traversed it half-blind, understanding the present scarcely better than the future.

But Saturday morning brings too soon our *propriétaires* from Paris for a few days: we see them from the garden on their walk from the little cabaret below ("Au Bon Coin"), where the omnibus stops, then coming resolutely up the orchard-slope, followed by a maid, bag and baggage, and very soon the premises are resounding for some hours with the thin screaming voice of the lady, which at a distance is almost like a child's treble, and with the soft, oily, coaxing under-tones of the gentleman.

Monsieur and Madame Charlier claim to be gentry, and to have fallen from a better position through losses in one of the revolutions. It is amazing what use is made of some one or other of the revolutions by every one whose present appearance is not brilliant. The father of M. Charlier was, we are told, one of Napoleon's generals, and he himself has been in Algeria, and was connected with the army by some office in the commissariat, till some unfortunate *sottise*, as we heard it called, relating to money affairs, caused his temporary

water. The ladies, with a bad Parisian air, more frequently English and American than French, in gay dresses, and with very little youth or beauty, saunter about under their fine parasols, sometimes sing, and mingle in noisy flirtation their bold shrill voices with the coarse, deep masculine tones. They have tried hard to make acquaintance with us, and, being constantly repulsed, now take their revenge by staring at us and into our rooms as they pass, repeating our names and talking of us as if we were wild animals. At six o'clock they repair to their dinner *au second*, or in the *orangerie*, a queer bit of building in the grounds, occasionally let to tenants; after which they return to the gardens, and sit on chairs on the lawn just under our windows, all jumbled together, smoking and talking in the beautiful moonlight half the night, till, to our great joy, we hear a tumultuous interchange of "Bonsoir, mesdames," and six or seven loud English good-nights, and they stream off their separate ways.

After this deluge of doubtful gentility, it is a decided relief to see an honest blouse, or a woman in great clattering sabots and handkerchief-coiffure go by, the gardener or workmen in their shirt-sleeves, whistling innocently, Zoë

coquetry still hanging about her. She trips actively about, singing in a cracked voice, with much would-be childish vivacity. Her face is generally pleasant and good-humored, but we have reason to know that it can in a moment look quite otherwise; and in the sprightly infantine voice there is a sharp intonation which may easily rise into a virago-like scream. Honorine, with the usual spirit of French servants, entered at once and the same time into possession of her new premises and a fierce war with madame, even before the latter had had time to do any thing wrong. We, however, take care to have no quarrel.

But the most objectionable part of these people is the train of friends, or lodgers in their *pension* at Paris, male and female, low English or lawless French, which generally follows them, and for a short period quite spoils the sweetness of our summer retreat. Forthwith the lawn is taken possession of, and the lovely garden filled with boisterous talk and laughter. The gentlemen slink about with cigars, in straw hats and white linen coats and trowsers—very cool and comfortable, no doubt; their mode of whiling away the bright afternoon is stripping the cherry-trees without permission, and drinking brandy and

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the *jardinière*, always busy, or our own nice, clean, quiet *bonne* Honorine, in her pink cotton Sunday gown, stopping to give us some confidential asides. I feel then in congenial society.

But I propose to describe a day in this French country house when it is in its normal and unexcited state, with only a few *locataires* besides ourselves. We, the only family who observe country hours, have just finished our eight o'clock breakfast in the large, sunny, unfurnished dining-room, and sit in the low, wide window-seat, watching the busy little world of Les Rosiers beginning its summer-day career. The sun is shining over the south garden or court; on the broad gravel-walk before the house kittens and puppies are tumbling about in full play, lying in ambush behind the green box of the biggest orange-tree, or jumping up to the stone bench where Sibyl and I have taken up our work to enjoy the mignonnette-scented air and the brightness all round, and the gambols of dear little May under her nurse's care. The long row of stone buildings on one side begins with the gardener's cottage and ends in the *basse cour*, where the poultry run, a square stone-walled tank, hidden in trees, the rose-acacia drooping over it its long

pink-blossomed boughs, and the *porte-cochère*, a great, high, wooden gate, fixed in two thick stone props, whose projections are hollowed out into dog-kennels, and studded with that mysterious assortment of bolts, beams, bars, and great clumsy locks that French mechanism delights in. Every thing is in disrepair, and betrays the tale of our *propriétaire's* difficulties. He is a rash, sanguine man, who, not content with his *pension* in Paris, chose five years ago to go and purchase this place, unknown to his shrewder wife, and to her great disgust absorb all the gains of that more prosperous business in this unlucky bargain.

There passes out to the kitchen-garden the meek little gardener's wife, with her small figure and quiet, pensive face. She seems to concern herself with nothing but her duties, and to keep apart from the busy, tattling, quarrelling world around. Or again, with a great straw hat perched on the top of her wren-like figure, she is on a ladder gathering orange-blossoms for that odious traffic in orange-flower water that Madame Charlier delights in. Then there is the gardener in shirt-sleeves and bare feet, who cries to the sitters in the window, "Prenez garde de l'eau, mesdames! je vais arroser les arbres!" and up

goes one of two big pitchers, and down on a great orange-tree descends the splashing cascade. Very pretty did these seventy orange-trees look, ranged round in their boxes, their bright leaves glittering with the sun and the dripping water.

One by one, or in twos, the various lodgers appear and exchange good-humored bows or *bonjours* with each other; but after that they pursue their occupations apart. The *propriétaire* is the first of all on foot, with his round, mustached face, and features insignificant to nullity, his thick neck, and characteristic walk, as of a man with much to do, beset with cares and perplexities, yet trying to affect the *dégagé* air of a do-nothing gentleman. He holds conference with gardener or master-mason, whom he can not pay, or curiously counts his wall-fruit, his peaches and grapes secured in great bags, to be sure that his various lodgers, to whom he is willing to sell them at something beyond the market price, have not secured them at a much cheaper rate. "Julie! tu as touché mes pêches!" is a frequent discourteous affirmation. And truly such an accident is not impossible, as one feels on beholding that giddy young couple who bound into the garden, Jules and Julie—cousins, I believe, though

water. The ladies, with a bad Parisian air, more frequently English and American than French, in gay dresses, and with very little youth or beauty, saunter about under their fine parasols, sometimes sing, and mingle in noisy flirtation their bold shrill voices with the coarse, deep masculine tones. They have tried hard to make acquaintance with us, and, being constantly repulsed, now take their revenge by staring at us and into our rooms as they pass, repeating our names and talking of us as if we were wild animals. At six o'clock they repair to their dinner *au second*, or in the *orangerie*, a queer bit of building in the grounds, occasionally let to tenants; after which they return to the gardens, and sit on chairs on the lawn just under our windows, all jumbled together, smoking and talking in the beautiful moonlight half the night, till, to our great joy, we hear a tumultuous interchange of "Bonsoir, mesdames," and six or seven loud English good-nights, and they stream off their separate ways.

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plain to us; I suggested that probably he had been waked from sleep. "Qu'est-ce que ça me fait?" she said, scornfully; "it's his business; il est payé pour cela." Hearing these words from the garden, the gardener broke in, bawling from the distance with angry loquacity; and then these two French spitfires went on shooting out their abuse like discharges of artillery, their words racing after each other as fast as they could go. We tried to moderate; the gardener said, "It's a hard thing for a man who has worked all day to be called up when he has just gone to bed."

"We have called you up sometimes, have we not?" said Sibyl, in her gentle tones.

"Oh madame, pour vous et mademoiselle, volontiers; mais pour une domestique—non!"

He did not see the want of logic involved in the distinction; and we let the affair go, wishing that Honorine were not one of those excellent but dangerous servants who, serving us with zeal, take care that no one else shall do so.

Presently M. Charlier saunters down to his present grand business—a construction, or new building, on the north side, at the end of one of the terrace-walks, which is to contain a *salle-à-manger*, a kitchen, and two bedrooms. Why

he is doing this it is difficult to say, seeing that he can hardly let what he has, and is too poor to pay his workmen; but I suppose the fever of building or the dream of speculation has seized him. The materials are furnished by the old crumbling stone wall which ran along the upper side of the terrace—a strange, slovenly mode of building, and one can hardly fancy that a house made of these old stones, so roughly put together, will stand; but that is his affair.

The first part of the process—clearing the ground for the new building—presented a lively scene. All the young population were at work, or rather at play, there—that is, doing the *ouvriers'* business for pure amusement. The three boys—and even the young Julie—were busy digging and shovelling spadefuls of earth into the wheelbarrow, which M. Charlier wheeled away. Soon the wall rose, the flooring was begun, and some of the beams were already fixed; and here, amidst this skeleton frame-work, M. Charlier, in a gorgeous blue dressing-gown, generally took his station. Passing underneath, we see his feet solemnly depending over our heads from among the beams; we look up, and behold his broad figure perched there in profound silence and im-

mobility; and so it remains for half the day. One of the elder boys is generally there beside him, in the character of a deeply interested amateur. The planks cover the pathway, and intercept our progress down by the mossy stone steps to the prairie; but the workmen are always polite, and show us where to step, encouraging us with a "Voilà, mademoiselle, un beau chemin: vous pouvez passer, vous sautez bien."

One of the workmen is Hippolyte Langlois, the young handsome mason, of whom I shall have more to say, whose attentions seem so equally divided between our Honorine and the young, blooming, smiling *bonne* of our friends in the village. It is true, he takes advantage of this close neighborhood to pay many a visit to our kitchen-window; but then it is also true that, in the absence of her employers, the pretty Louise spends much of her time helping her friend Honorine. So it is still an open question which is preferred.

But the life of Les Rosiers does not go on energetically under this increasing heat. It is one of those grave, burning days that march flamingly, relentlessly by, one after another, like a succession of Eastern tyrants, till life, soul, body, seem to expire under the weight

of heat that each pitiless hour piles upon it. Our usually restless neighbors are quiet, most of them shut up during the burning weather in the orangerie like bottled wasps. How those builders can go on as they do, carrying long planks of newly-sawn wood, making their hammers ring on falling pieces of stone, shouting to each other every minute, "Léopold! Maurice! Hippolyte!" with their untiring labor, and still more untiring clatter of talk, is something unfathomable.

In the afternoon, as Sibyl and I sat in the hall, seeking half a degree less heat, there passed by, and looked in, the *maître-maçon*, the father of the admired Hippolyte, a broad, rough-looking old fellow, in the usual shirt and blue trowsers, all splashed with lime and mortar. He stopped, gave the usual "bonjour," and asked whether we would like to buy a "jolie propriété" that he had to sell. We made some civil reply, and he strode into the hall, seated himself on a chair by us, and, quite undisconcerted by his elementary costume, entered into loud and voluble conversation. The subject was a detailed and profuse eulogy of this house, to be had, with one "arpent de terre" and fifteen rooms, for three thousand francs. He invited us to come and

see it on Sunday evening, praising every thing, and appealing to me at every turn with "N'est-ce pas, mademoiselle? vous l'avez vu?" a broad grin on his great red face, as he repeated the same words twenty times over, interspersing it all with "Vous aurez quelque chose de bien, allez! Madame, je vous promets une maison superbe. Je puis dire que vous aurez le corps de bâtiment le plus joli du monde. Vous aurez tout ce que vous voudrez, et ça ne sera pas une grande coûtance pour vous." He then went on enthusiastically to describe its perfections—its two pits and its cistern, where water never lacked—how summer and winter a gardener close by would supply us with vegetables—and ended by imploring us to go and see it. "Mademoiselle Honorine ira avec vous, et vous montrera la maison—n'est-ce pas, mademoiselle?" turning to her.

He moved off to the hall-door several times, but as often returned to repeat the same words; and finally, on an inquiry of Sibyl's as to the progress of the "bâtiments en bas," he answered mysteriously, "Ça est commencé, madame, mais ça n'avance pas." And then, resuming his chair, but moving it confidentially closer, and lowering his voice to a whisper, he continued, "M. Charlier et moi, nous ne sommes

pas d'accord. Je ne veux pas continuer de bâtir à ce prix; il ne me paye pas assez, et nous sommes mécontents tous! Il ne me donne que trois francs le jour—oui, madame, rien que cela! et si je suis à la tête de tous les maçons comme de raison, si j'ai à les trouver, les faire travailler, leur payer leurs gages, il me faut plus. J'attends à lui parler. Dites donc," to Zoë, who passed by, "M. Charlier, est-il en haut ou en bas?" At last he fairly took his departure, to our considerable relief, and Honorine instantly assured us that she did not think the house would do at all, that all the repairs it would cost would certainly raise the rent, and she suggested our buying this place instead — a tempting vision to those whose hearts yearn after this quiet loveliness, and this land of many hopes and dreams.

These republican manners (indeed this social equality is the only trace of republican liberty left in France) do not displease us at all, for the people are always civil and respectful to us, simply as ladies, not as people richer or grander than themselves.

At length the cool evening draws on, and is spent variously by our various parties. For myself, on going down to the prairie to seek for my sister, I met M. and Madame Charlier

sauntering arm-in-arm: after years of quarrelling, they occasionally enact the part of lovers. They were both in high good-humor, especially monsieur, who took me to task, and asked me why I did not run, and especially why I did not go and play with the young ladies at the orangeries, who, as they said, were very *gentilles*, and whose agreeable society would give me all the spirits I wanted. I made some civil excuse, and observed of one of them—a young English girl—that I should not have thought her English, her air was so altogether French.

"Ah! to be French is what every one aims at," replied M. Charlier; and then, supposing me to share in this universal passion, he added, "You, too, mademoiselle, might have a French air if you would; but the way to acquire it is to have abandon, not to think of your dignity, but to associate with other young people; *that* is to be French. For me, I amuse myself also with young persons and children. I run, I laugh with them. People say, 'Ah! see that gentleman, he is mad;' but I do not care."

All this was said by himself, and acquiesced in by madame with such determined affability, and such bland facetiousness, that I replied, as

well as I could, in the same vein, and, though I could not promise any great amendment, we parted good friends.

Perhaps one cause of this apparent harmony in monsieur and madame is that their respective mothers are this evening come down. Honorine, who knows every thing about every body, draws rather a "spicy" picture of these two ladies. Apparently, by a curious law of nature, the mother of our imperious, energetic landlady is a gentle, passive old body, who has never done any thing in her life, not even needle-work, and who yields to every one; while the mother of the meek, smooth-spoken husband is a most domineering dame, who sadly tyrannizes over the poor, mild old lady, her assumed superiority being founded on her greater wealth. It seems that in her early days Madame Charlier the elder was very poor; that her husband, who had risen to a colonel's rank, was killed gallantly defending an untenable position, for which, after his death, he was made a general, and his widow is at ease on her pension. She has one other son, who has married a millionnaire's daughter, with whom this mother-in-law is forever quarrelling, because she will live in the drudging style to which *she* in the days of her youth was accustomed.

This grim old lady passed us, and certainly she resembles nothing so much as an old bull-terrier as she stumps by, short and puffy, her features stiffened and screwed up, and her voice at its softest a growl. However, she was gracious to me, to whom she seems to have taken a fancy, and taking hold of my hair—long ringlets are an unspeakable mystery to the French mind — said in playful irony, "Dites-moi, ils sont très-commodes, ces grands boucles!"

The other old lady we also made acquaintance with: as we sat in our window, watching the games of the young people in the dim garden, there waddled up to us the "contrary of the terrier," as Sibyl characterized the good-humored one of the two *mesdames mères*, and, sitting down on the stone bench outside, entered into conversation with us. Apropos of some remark that I incidentally made, she lectured me, obviously with a purpose, on the propriety and advantage of being sociable in the country—how that young people ought to "courir, jouer, danser à la ronde"—how there ought to be no pride nor exclusiveness, but perfect equality—how we ought not to consider whether our neighbors are richer or poorer than ourselves, but join in their amusements,

and be all cheerful together—how, when she was young, she sang and danced, laughed and enjoyed herself. And, indeed, when I looked at her face, with features still beautiful at seventy-five, I can well imagine her youth, even amidst poverty, to have been gay and bright enough to fulfill a Frenchwoman's notion of happiness. Why the good lady does us the honor to hint, in apparent reference to us, at the pride of wealth, I do not know, unless our reserve, the fact of our being English, and our having taken both the *rez-de-chaussée* and the *premier* have given us that reputation.

In spite of all these reasonable admonitions, we let a tumultuous game of *cache-cache* fill the dusky, shady garden without our help. For the most part, the two pale, grave young girls, Eulalie and Julie, wandered about with the little Jules, finding their own amusement in a quiet way; perhaps seated with the good-natured homely old grandmother in the moonlight, on a bench, or crouching together like young birds in some shadowy corner. And there they remain, to roam the garden as long as they like, and go to bed as late as they please, wasting, in consequence, these beautiful summer mornings in bed till eight o'clock.

As for the older ones, we find that on those

social occasions when the Paris *pensionnaires* are down here they retire to the billiard-house, and "mènent," as a peasant expressed it, "une vie terrible." He, being up late in a prairie tending a sick cow, heard a "tapage furieux de messieurs et de dames," who all of them "smoked like dragoons," drank, and laughed till midnight. This being confided to Honorine as the proceedings of her *maîtres*, drew from her an emphatic disclaimer of having any thing to do with *that* establishment.

When all is quiet in our neighborhood we steal through the garden into the prairie, to gaze at the relics of the sunset, which still glows orange over the aqueduct, and bathes that end of the valley in a rain of gold light, the arches standing out from a sea of glowing vapor which makes them too look unreal. And then, as we stand on this meadow-slope, where there is always a cool fresh whisper of wind to revive us after the sultry heat, we see the lovely valley melting away through soft shades of grayness; and then, turning to reascend, we behold at the top before us, niched in the arch of two tall trees, one pure gold star. But wait, and we shall see the moon slowly rise behind the trees that border the field to the east, till she mounts over their

tops, and throws silver fretwork across the gray slope, and turns the wall on the other side to a glittering white, when the aqueduct, as if newly created of snowy marble, starts up phantom-like from its basement of trees. Look to the vale, where the poplars, the red rock, and the houses make no longer a molten mass together, but slowly and softly detach their separate forms, and stand out in a new and delicate relief. And then, to enjoy this, we creep into our favorite, warm, still verdant nook, and ask each other if we wish to return to England.

Once more, let us wind up with a look into the court, now all stillness, embalmed by orange fragrance, with the bright moon looking through the great walnut-trees. We look at our house-front: there is our drawing-room lamp in the *rez-de-chaussée*, a shaded light in Sibyl's nursery on the *premier*, another in one of the small rooms in the *second*, where Madame Léonini and her sons dwell, and Honorine's candle, in her high tower-room behind and above; these appear but as a few scattered sparks amidst a general sleepy dusk. And so, as Les Rosiers seems to have fallen asleep, we will wish it a peaceful good-night.

CHAPTER XII.

A FRENCH VILLAGE.

IN this village, which belonged to Les Rosiers, or Les Rosiers to the village—which you will—we gradually became quite at home. At first our chief link of communication was Honorine, who, with great spirit and corresponding success, has fitted herself for her position here, and is an invaluable help to us. An excellent servant, faultlessly punctual, of memory never-failing, excellent alike at bargaining and cooking, quiet and regular in all her ways, there is no domestic like Honorine. Her subjects of interest are limited, but on those in which she knows her strength she is abundantly positive. Besides procuring us the goodwill of many of these worthy villagers, she provokes occasional breezes with officials, and even sometimes with our *propriétaires;* however, these serve to vary the monotony of existence.

Like a true Parisian (though Picard-born), she has great contempt for country manners and intelligence, especially for the specimens here. She complains of their way of talking,

which is certainly rugged and unintelligible, and says, "On a ici la gorge très-forte." Apropos of a very neat green checked gown of hers that we were admiring, she told us that as she went into the village the people by the way laughed at her, and told her it was a gown to go to the Carnival in. This we supposed was rather a compliment; but she assured us that it was in allusion to the rags and tatters which at that time are carried about for sale, and that such allusions were always meant for insolence. She said she had made no answer, for they would not have understood her, "tant ces gens du pays sont bêtes." She *could* have said, "C'est trop bon, monsieur, pour aller au Carnaval avec vous. Mais à quoi cela servirait-il? They would only have replied with some new insolence."

"It is," she added, "que les gens du pays n'aiment que les couleurs voyantes, les robes écarlates et tout ce qu'il y a de plus gai; quant aux couleurs de Paris qui sont plus distinguées, ils les trouvent mesquines. Et c'est le même pour les figures, ils n'aiment pas les teints pâles, ils les admirent quand ils sont rouges comme les pavots."

One day I found in the kitchen a tall, very handsome man, dressed like a gentleman, evi-

dently intensely conscious of his attractions, talking in a mincing *doucereux* tone, and apparently bringing his Adonis-ship to aid in his bargaining. He came to propose selling us butter, represented himself as a *propriétaire*, and talked a great deal about his grounds, his horse, and himself. Honorine, who entertained a hearty contempt for him, took him off afterwards for our satisfaction, mimicked the *niais* air and soft, drawling tone of his address. "Bonjour, mademoiselle. Est-ce que madame veut du beurre ou autre chose! J'ai de bon beurre, d'ex-cel-lent beurre;" and then, said Honorine, disdainfully, he went on about his "six arpents de terre, sa maison et son jardin, qui étaient magnifiques." What did that signify? she said. "What was the good of so many words, when he only came to talk about himself?" I asked, was he a farmer? "No," she said, "il n'a acheté une vache que pour s'amuser." She described his manners as "basses," his "façon de parler grasse, comme s'il avait du beurre ou du bouillon dans la gorge;" and, in spite of his "air pieux talk, as if he were saying his prayers," she pronounced him to have the look of an *intrigant*, such as in Paris enter one's house on some pretext and carry off the spoons.

She was one day very indignant because M. Charlier had given to the *concierge* a message for us, which she, more delicate, did not like to deliver, viz., that we were to gather no more flowers, in spite of his first spontaneous promise, but be content with two very common bouquets once a week. She declared this "très-petit, très-plat—si c'était à moi, ce serait passable, mais donner de tels ordres à des dames et demoiselles, les traiter comme des enfants dans la rue—violà ce qu'ils sont, ces gens—c'est ce que je n'ai jamais su ailleurs."

A slight difference one day took place with madame la propriétaire, on occasion of her sending some people, without any warning, to take away the piano from our drawing-room, a commission which the good-natured gardener and workmen executed very unwillingly. The postman was so interested that he stopped twice as he passed the window, to look in and repeat, "Quelle méchanceté!" I remonstrated a little, not very wisely, as she was perfectly "dans son droit;" but, behold! the tigress started up in a moment, the French claws were out like lightning, the eyes flashed fire, and the voice was raised to a perfect peacock's scream of angry self-justification. Seeing her in this excited state, I said little or nothing,

and turned quietly away, she bawling after me, "Personne ne m'apprendra les usages!"

All this was uttered on the stairs, and was audible all through the house, so unmanageable was the lady's enthusiasm. Soon after, we heard her raging to her husband, her wrath being *now* turned on Honorine, who had expressed *her* opinion the most decidedly of all, and who now heard her say, "Attends un peu, pendant que j'arrange Honorine dans la cuisine." The latter, like a true French game-hen, was not à bit dismayed by the prospect, but prepared herself, with great glee and spirit, for an equal combat. Taking my sister aside, she rehearsed to her what she meant to say, with the most animated gestures and a perfect theatrical effect, waving her arms and throwing worlds of emphasis into her voice. The whole was in a style of polite and cutting irony, and wound up with a sharp hit in the way of allusion to her guests, with the words, "une maison si peu respectable." It was amusing to see Honorine, who is ordinarily a quiet and peaceable person enough, so transformed. However, the great fight did not come off; for madame had thought better of it, and in a few hours came to our window, the smiling, courteous little Frenchwoman once

more, to explain and apologize for what she called her "vivacité Française."

However, let us now pass out of the *porte-cochère*, and find ourselves in that little rude village street which makes up Les Rosiers. It is highly picturesque, as the cottages are mostly crumbling and tumbling at every corner. They were almost all built from the ruins of the hunting chateaux which the *noblesse* in the olden days used to occupy here, and are of solid stone, roughly put together, with sloping thatched roofs, and crumbling stone steps outside. Though low, they have a good deal of extent in the way of odd ins and outs, wings, gables, pent-houses, yards, and out-houses. The street ends in a little place, with the church on one side, the *mairie* on the other, a large stone reservoir, and the green gates of a *maison bourgeoise*, with its pretty garden, which holds a family who are to become, though as yet we know it not, valued friends—that of M. Gérard, a *pasteur* of the Protestant Church in Paris.

The church is a plain little old building, with a cock for vane. "Venite ad me omnes" is written over the porch, and beside it are a stone Virgin and Child in a niche. The school-house joins on to it, and next that is a

little *cabaret*, with a bush and a small picture of a party drinking at a table over the door, and a China rose blooming between the windows, kept by the Mère Dubois. The *mairie* is the most imposing building in the village, but it is only a low cottage with a long white-washed front, defaced by various old *affiches* half torn off, such as "Vente du Mobilier de Madame Veuve," "Adjudication d'une Maison Bourgeoise, Jardin et Cour," "Le Préfet aux habitants de Seine-et-Oise. On répand à Paris de fausses nouvelles sur l'état de la province; on doit répandre en province de fausses nouvelles sur l'état de Paris. L'émeute est SUPPRIMÉE dans la capitale; toutes les nouvelles des Départements sont excellentes." And again, fresh and conspicuous over all, "Louis Napoléon, Président de la République, au Peuple Français," and then that long address of December 2.

The one or two respectable houses of this homely little village rejoice in tiled roofs, whitewashed walls, and *persiennes*, have little gardens in front, with vines and sweet peas, a cherry-tree or so, and vegetables enough for themselves; for there are none to be bought here. Of these houses is the curé's, with its gabled front and four small windows; nothing

can be plainer and poorer, but his garden is well tended, and I believe he is not poor. His sister has married the village tailor, and his niece makes our dresses.

From the place a steep lane, embowered in wild roses, brings you down to the valley, to the somewhat large but still most rural village nestling in it, with the little cabaret whence starts the omnibus for Versailles, to the little stream creeping through, and the aqueduct on its smooth green ridge. At the other end of Les Rosiers you descend by apple orchards and sloping hay-fields, now fragrant with new-mown grass, to the same vale. Among the woods in the neighborhood are various farm-houses called *bouillis*, and inclosed by a wall. These in the time of Louis XIV. were all royal property, and occupied by the *enfants de la cour*, as they called the Duc de Maine, etc., who were brought up there in seclusion, and fed, as was customary, on *bouilli:* hence the name.

During the first part of our stay we received several visits for the day from Paris friends, but as summer went on almost all departed for foreign homes and distant tours; and when the last went, I thought, "And *we* shall spend the next five months in one unchanged scene

of deep solitude, to behold the summer days one after the other rise and set over these wooded heights and valley-meadows, to hear the same birds' voices in the same acacia-trees, to see the same long poplar-shadows in the field below, to see the same gold sunsets bathe the red rocks and the arches of the aqueduct, to have for our daily incidents the same regularly recurring tradesmen—the baker's girl, Mélanie, bringing the *croissants*, which we have taught them to make, at eight o'clock; the postman, in a blue blouse, passing the window at ten; the *boucher*, the *jardinier*, exchanging good-humored words with us, and sometimes giving us a bouquet; to hear that regular school-bell which gives a few solemn strokes twice or thrice a day; and to have, by way of variety, an occasional visit for the day from our *propriétaires*, wound up by sarcastic comments from Honorine on their behavior and alarms of new *locataires*." Yet such a life in so lovely a spot, with an under-current of dream or a sun-touch of hope to gild its calm surface, might have much in it for the heart; and so we found it.

Never shall I forget those delicious summer mornings when it was my wont to ramble out before breakfast to enjoy the few cool

hours of the day. The known, familiar landscape seemed then changed into a fresh-created paradise, bathed in its first gold dew, with its ethereal elements not yet quite resolved from a rich confusion of mist, lights, shadows, and pearly liquidness, into clear and separate form! I went down through the orchard and the prairie (I am describing but one of these many walks), out by a little gate that never shuts, half hid in thick hedges, into the corner of a small green lane leading out into the three roads to different villages. I passed along, and took my way onward to a favorite knoll, on whose grassy top all was dewy sunshine and emerald shade, and under whose knot of tall birch-trees I gazed down on the whole valley. It slept below, pillowed on woods, with wreaths of bright, vague mist softly hanging over it, the aqueduct at one end shining boldly out, in the middle rich meadows, poplar-bounded, the big village looking only like a few houses pressed together in the centre of the valley, and a delicate dream of blue distance between woods and rocks closing up the prospect. In the flood of pale translucent turquoise above, that slowly deepened into solid sapphire, the little snowy spot of moon still hung, but white and evanescent as a dy-

ing face; there was a soft stir in the air like the pulse of morning life.

But sounds are beginning to wake up around, like the tinkling of small bells, ringing the world back to life and business—the birds with laughing, whispering, screwing, or bubbling notes; the creaking of cart-wheels, the whetting of scythes; the voices here and there of the hay-makers, or of the women and children watching the cows, secured as usual by a string. These animals belong to different owners, and are generally stall-fed, though allowed for a few hours in the day to graze in the field of some richer *propriétaire*. I talk to their keepers (they have to be guarded, because mostly there are no fences or hedges to French fields) and hear the praises of the *belles vaches*, and admire the gay groups of the younger ones that run about pursuing the more self-willed of the charges over the dewy, sunny prairie-slopes, while others sit in the shade eating their breakfast. Rosalie, a poor *folle*, kindly treated by all, who fancies she too is tending cows, is always to be found here, with wild looks and grotesque attire. As a proof of her *folie*, she wears a bonnet, actually the only one in the village: a strange, sunburnt, shapeless thing it is. Now she stands

and calls to me, triumphantly waving a thick leafy sapling-stem like a sceptre.

It is pleasant, as one "takes one's walk abroad," to exchange friendly words with these peasantry. An old woman will discuss flowers with us, and talk of those which are most "distingués," and how we remind her of an English lady who was alone in the *pension* last year, and spent all her time in solitary walks, searching for wild flowers. The old goat-herd, as I pass down the wide pastures and look at his two beautiful white goats, the only objects breaking those shining slopes, smiles and says, "Vous faites votre promenade de bonne heure, mademoiselle!" Even the pretty little boy, of four or five, who sleeps curled up under a hay-stack, opens his blue eyes with that sweet, doubtful smile which takes the heart captive, and warbles out, "Bonjour, madame!"

On this occasion I explored a new way, and arrived at a certain cottage, a lonely, abandoned, poetic cottage, which stands on its own knoll of green sward, in its own circle of trees, and among its own meadows, so charmingly situated, but so hopelessly forsaken, and to which there seems no possible access till one has found and followed the scarcely visible

track upward, and come close to it. A light white garden-gate, left neglectedly open, and a green walk, lead to the cottage; a superb walnut-tree and Spanish chestnut embower it; a vine grows on one of the walls, its neglected grapes fast ripening. Closed windows, barred doors, grass-grown court, a blank look, and signs of growing disrepair, speak of the sixteen years it has been left thus. It stands so close on the brow of the hill it looks as if a touch would push it down into the vale, whose beautiful secrets it seems leaning over to behold.

In a hollow below I once saw a girl tending two cows—the nymph of the solitude. I accosted her. She had a sweet little *piquante* face, with the usual grave, plaintive expression of young womanhood here; her large brown-black eyes were full of grave, latent passion, like the eyes of a mulatto; but her voice had a clear, young music in it, and her replies were cheerful. She was fourteen years old; her name, Louise Mouly; she was servant to M. Deschamps, a farmer at Les Rosiers, and kept his two cows here from early morn till nightfall, her mistress assisting her to tend them in the morning, and to drive them in at dusk. Adieu, then, Louise Mouly; pursue, as yet, in innocent solitude, your life of pastoral duty;

some day your cows will be left to stray, while those eyes of still flame talk with other eyes.

But the sun grows high and hot, and I return home up the hill through a hay-field, and by a narrow, romantic, red, stony path, hidden under the great branching arms of some most noble *marronniers* (horse-chestnuts). There, again, led now by the old man's wife through clustering honeysuckles, are the white goat and its beautiful snowy kid, that leaps over the young shrubs and butts at its mother. I admire it much, and the old woman concludes that there were no goats in England. The good old man (of ninety) apologizes for not hearing quite well.

As I approached the hamlet I remembered that I wanted some poppies to complete a bouquet of wild flowers I was painting; and seeing some in a corn-field just above the road, I entered it, and made two steps into the wheat to secure my spoil. Suddenly a voice called "Mademoiselle!" and up started, as it seemed from the ground, a white-bearded, stooping old peasant, who told me that I must not walk in the corn, that it did a great deal of harm, that the *propriétaire* would be very angry, etc. I made all sorts of apologies, pointed out that I

had done no damage, and went my way. In our own grounds I found the workmen conversing in some excitement about something or other, and soon learned that the subject of discourse was that the *garde-champêtre* had caught mademoiselle in the corn, and was about to make a *procès-verbal* about it, and have her fined. We consulted M. Charlier, and found, to our surprise, that, instead of being a mere extortion, the whole proceeding was perfectly justifiable by law. The *garde-champêtre* is a sort of public officer, as much so, he said, as a *gendarme*, paid by the community to guard all their fields; that a single step off the path is a trespass, which the *garde* is bound to report; and that it is at the owner's choice to exact what sum he thinks proper, or "faire dresser un procès-verbal"—that is, lodge a complaint at the Cour de la Justice, and summon the offender to stand his trial. Though a suit might have been very amusing, especially if one had appeared one's self, instead of paying an *avocat*, yet, as it was not quite worth the trouble and expense, I consented to pay the *amende*. M. Charlier promised to persuade the injured owner to be moderate in his demand, and in due time the *garde-champêtre* appeared with a dirty bit of paper,

on which M. Bédard had made an ill-spelt statement that I owed him fifty sous.

No doubt the excessive rigor with which property is guarded in France has its justification. The land is uninclosed, and the majority of proprietors are poor, depending wholly on those few acres for their subsistence, so that injury is very easily done, and would be severely felt. It is against law even to step off the public path to gather a flower at all in a field; to pluck a single ear subjects one to a two-francs fine. So it seems I was quite "dans mon tort." The same penalties await the walking in a hay-field before it is mown; if, after it is mown, the owner means to get a second crop off it, he sticks up a bundle of straw and a piece of wood in one corner. If this warning is unseen or disregarded, the inevitable *garde-champêtre*, and the fine or the *procès-verbal*, follow.

This incident seemed a pleasing excitement in our small world. M. Charlier, who, I think, enjoyed it the most, praised the liberality of the man in not insisting on the *procès-verbal*, and told us some little stories of his own sufferings by the law—how that once he had a horse who got loose from the servant, and ate some grass by the side of the path, which,

however, as M. Charlier saw, it did not once leave, yet, threatened with a *procès*, he paid at once five francs to escape it. Also, how that one day driving to Versailles he bought a little pig by the way, put it for convenience into his carriage, and drove on into the town. Thereupon a clamor arose, his carriage was surrounded, and the octroi duty demanded for the little grunter; he refused to pay, was charged with attempting to cheat the law, his carriage and horse were seized, and he had to walk home, and pay finally double the price of his pig.

Having told these cheerful stories, he wound up by adding, with his oiliest smile—probably by way of revenge for the two or three roses we have taken from his garden—"Vous voyez, mademoiselle, ce que c'est que de cueillir des fleurs—les coquelicots coûtent cher—hein?" and then he laughed playfully.

So I, with my noble Anglican spirit, said "I did not imagine people would be so hard on a *demoiselle* who did not know the law, and had done no mischief. A *Française* would not be treated so in England;" whereat he laughed still more.

Next morning, as I returned from my usual walk, the gardener cheerfully accosted me

with "Eh bien, mademoiselle, vous étiez donc attrappée hier—n'est-ce pas?"

The curé, who called soon after, treated the affair as a mere extortion, and said the man was a *vieux ivrogne*, who only wanted something to drink—"voilà!" The thing is also condemned in the village on a chivalrous point of view, and a message was sent to me by one of its inhabitants, that he was very sorry I had been so treated, "pour le crédit de la France," and that he hoped I would come and gather as many flowers from *his* garden as I liked.

This resulted in a visit from Sibyl and me to the peasant-proprietor, who is quite a great man in his way, and is no other than M. Langlois, the master-mason, whom M. Charlier employs. The visit was originated by Honorine, who accompanied us; she delights in being associated with our doings, and is always eager to take us about and introduce us to her friends. The house is a solid, picturesque stone cottage, whose entrance and exterior would be considered shabby in England, though the proprietors are rich and have taken pains to make themselves comfortable; but good building, at least good finishing off, seems a thing unknown in French country-

life. We entered through a low dark door, by a passage darker still, then through a low, large empty room where cider is made, and emerged into a good-sized garden at the back, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and nice flowers, and a beautiful view over the valley.

Madame told us with pride that it was kept up entirely by her son, who, as he worked with his father on M. Charlier's grounds, had only an hour or two in the early morning or the late evening to devote to it. The young man presently appeared, and blushed his modest pleasure at our praise of his labors, though only venturing now and then to join with a word or two in the conversation. He is about twenty years old, tall and slight, and has a charming face, with something of the sweetness and modesty of a girl's expression, a feminine gentleness of manner, and withal so good, true, and simple a look, that one can not imagine any thing but innocence in the soul within. I have not unfrequently met this type among the peasant-boys here, a delicate, almost Raffaelesque beauty of feature, with an equally beautiful expression.

The good woman then showed us over all her premises: her husband bought the place sixteen years ago, and they made it, garden

and all, entirely themselves. When I asked her if she was fond of it, she said that to her there was no such place in the world! They have, besides, six *arpents de terre*, consisting of a meadow whence they get hay, and which is full of fine old apple-trees, used for cider. This they sell in large quantities, and make a great profit by; it is the only article of their produce that they sell. She insisted on our tasting her cider, which is very good.

After this we went into the yard, inspecting the nice clean *greniers*, fragrant with hay, and full of the great wooden vessels, pails, and barrels used for cider-making and other purposes. Then we went to the cow-house, and admired a very beautiful creature, cream-colored, something like an Alderney, but large and vigorous. It was stall-fed, as is the custom here, being turned out only for an hour or two in the day. All these concerns — garden, cider-press, cow, and farm-yard — are managed by the indefatigable son, who winds up his day with the accounts. The drawing-room (never used) and the best bedroom were also shown us; these were furnished as in the houses of the gentry, especially the latter, which was in fact the real sitting-room.

We parted with many mutual politenesses,

and much pleasure on our parts at this glimpse of a character unknown in England — the peasant-proprietor, completely a peasant, yet wealthy, possessed of all the comforts consistent with his social position, and not aspiring to more. The good woman herself was dressed like the humblest *paysanne;* the handkerchief *coiffure*, the loose body quite untrimmed, the short bed-gown petticoat, blue stockings, and coarse shoes—all of the plainest cut and texture, and all, though not unbecoming to youth, bloom, and a light figure, seemingly made to show off the advances of age.

One day we performed a very necessary but rather rare expedition; we went shopping to Versailles. We took the omnibus to go there, and returned walking in the cool of the evening. We went down to the Bon Coin Allard's, the little cabaret at the bottom of the lane, to await the small yellow omnibus which, announced by its horn as it came winding along the shady road from Montbrun, rattled up to the cabaret, with its crimson curtain and its one gray horse, and its good-humored, good-looking, stammering *conducteur.* There stepped in with us another party, who quickly attracted our notice. It consisted of an elderly gentleman and a pretty, graceful girl of sev-

enteen, evidently his daughter. Sibyl talked with the father, I with the young girl, who strongly took my fancy. How charming she was in her fresh youth, the fair face and its happy, serene smile, the neat girlish toilet, of which the fancy-straw bonnet, coquettishly lined with pink, set off her clear colorless complexion, and the bouquet of flowers she held in her hand. I began admiring it, which attention she took very prettily, and said, smiling, she should tell her Paris friends, to whom she was bringing it, "qu'on avait admiré son bouquet." Among her roses was a York and Lancaster rose, of which I told her the English name, and, presuming on a natural ignorance of our history, was explaining its origin, when she at once rejoined, "Oui, la guerre des Roses." So I guessed, and accurately, too, that she had been well brought up by careful and intelligent parents.

Sibyl meanwhile had discovered that these were our neighbors in the place, the Gérards, and that they meant to call on us. The father, an earnest and conscientious man, and liberal theologian, was, as I have said, a Protestant clergyman of Paris. Though the little house here belonged to them, and they come to it for the summer, so much of their time

was spent in Paris that our intercourse with them proved fitful and irregular, though always pleasant.

We entered Versailles, stopped at the Avenue de la Mairie, and spent two hours shopping in the Rue Satory. It is a great, unattractive place, this Versailles, with its wide, hard, stony, and sandy thoroughfares, mostly at faultless right angles with each other; its glare of white buildings, in which long dull barracks predominate; its want of life, of well-dressed people, and carriages—this aspect of straight uniformity being but little relieved by the formal avenues of trees which intersect it. The whole looks like a military town provided with shops only for the use of the garrison. There is not in the whole place an object of interest that I can discover, except the Chateau and the Trianon. It strikes one, too, how very few people there are in a town built for 30,000 inhabitants; all looks dull and empty and fine. Finally we leave it by the Rue Chantier, a long, rough, ill-paved, detestable street, where one sees nothing but detached *magasins* of the least engaging sort—*remises*, stables, timber-yards, *marchandise de vin*, *de tabac*, etc.—with constant gaps filled by mere waste places.

But, once past the Barrière, we soon find ourselves in the forest-way home, which consists of a pleasant walk of forty minutes through the Bois de Gouarts, with shade above us all the way—long vistas before and on each side of the wider wood-walks cut like green ribbons through the trees. At first we avoided the temptation of those narrow paths, that seem stealing secretly away to some green paradise that they alone know of; but now that we have mastered the geography of this wood, we fearlessly follow them, diving up and down between banks of fern, moss, and heath, with many an aromatic dry wood-scent, golden broken bits of sunshine, and islands of the lilac-blushing west at intervals. Besides, if we became bewildered, there was, to reassure and direct us, the Étoile—a great open grassy circle in the middle of the forest, from which diverge ten green roads like spokes of a wheel, with the obelisk-like guide-post in the middle, covered all round with the names of Buc, Boulie, Monteuil, etc. And all the way the blackcaps sang out deliciously, as if proud to have the woods to themselves, with no real nightingales to mock their imitation, or as if minded to make their last songs their best. And the cuckoo, whose pertinacious voice is heard ev-

ery day through rain and shine, who began the first, and has survived the nightingale and all the brief passionate joys of spring, unchanged amidst all these changes, goes on with those two passionless notes of his that seem repeating "Life is very weary." But patience, poor dull cuckoo! another year, and better times will come yet.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRIENDS AND FÊTES.

THE Gérards paid their promised visit, and thus began an acquaintance which was to become a happy friendship. The young Lucile accompanied her father on the first call, and, with her bright face looking out from the large straw hat and its blue ribbons, resembled (I must use French words to describe a French girl) a *petite rose des buissons baignée de rosée.* She had charming manners, not at all shy, and full of vivacity, but fresh and natural as possible, and marked by a modest grace. Her eyes and mouth talked in smiles, and her fresh young voice joined to them the music of lively words. She brought me a pretty bouquet, because I had admired the one she had with her in the omnibus. She looked like one secure of a happy future, giving as much to hope as she can spare from a sunny present.

From this time our intercourse became frequent and easy; we drank tea at each other's houses, and made acquaintance with an elder married daughter, who was less of a graceful

vision than Lucile, but had plenty of character and brain. In one of our visits I learned that M. Gérard had an ardent desire for his daughter to learn English, and had promised her a visit to England when she could speak and understand it tolerably. I gladly offered my services as instructress, and was accepted; but he doubted her fulfilling the conditions: "Elle était trop nigaude."

"Elle en a bien l'air," said Sibyl, laughing and looking at her; she confirmed her father's statement in words, while her speaking face and beaming eyes laughed an animated contradiction.

From this time forth for many weeks it was an almost daily pleasure to see the tall, elegant, girlish form come in at three o'clock through the south garden, in her white muslin jacket, her pretty hat on her head or in her hand, then enter the drawing-room and stand graceful and womanly while she did the first ceremonial salutations, being always carefully polite, like a true *Française*. Then I put up my painting materials, put on my hat, and we wandered out to our favorite resort at the top of the prairie. Here we sat under the great walnut-tree, and did our lesson most conscientiously, Lucile pleasantly distorting her pretty

little mouth in the painful task of repeating our harsh verbs. My system was of a very easy, accommodating sort; instead of crushing my pupil at the outset with grammar, syntax, and exercises, I took a light, conversational book, made her read first in English as a conversation-lesson, then translate it word by word into French; then I questioned about the words in each sentence, and when she went home, with the help of a dictionary she wrote out the whole lesson in French, and brought it to me the next day to correct. My method answered so far that the parents assured me Lucile would never have got on so well with any one else. I was, indeed, pleased with her progress. "But wait," I thought; "this is but the outset, and we are in the country, and there are no fêtes, no dances, to disturb her mind; we must not be too sanguine."

We were very conscientious, as I said, in doing our lessons, but that left plenty of time to talk, and plenty of talk accordingly we had; my sister often joined us, and we made a merry trio, spending the time in playful quarrels, long discussions, curious inquiries about manners and customs, and a good deal of innocent village *commérage*. On all these subjects Lu-

cile talked with bright intelligence; she was, I found, by no means fenced in with that passive infantine ignorance generally imposed on *demoiselles* of her age. She was, however, very carefully shielded from harm, her reading strictly supervised, her society limited and selected, and, indeed, her whole talking and thinking was pure as a stream running over pebbles.

Sometimes Lucile was pleasantly rallied on various youthful qualities; once, when she was reading to us from Dumas's "Mémoires," the following sentence occurred: "Je soupçonne fort la curieuse de dix-sept ans d'avoir collé son visage blond et rose contre la porte pour entendre la conversation." Sibyl maliciously interposed, "Take notice, mademoiselle — la curieuse de dix-sept ans."

"D'abord, madame," she answered, with vivacity, "j'ai 'honneur de vous avertir que j'avais hier dix-huit ans, et puis—mais oui, je suis un peu curieuse, il faut l'avouer."

Sometimes I rallied Lucile on her idleness, my pleasantries being, as may be supposed, of the most soft and stingless description; but she would defend herself smartly, and appeal from me to madame, the moderator and mediator, who, as she said, was always anxious that

no one should be hurt, and took care to interpret every thing in her favor. Dear little Lucile! who in good earnest could hurt *her?* But certainly Sibyl came nearer to the *aimable* French type than I, who must have presented a great contrast to that same type, in the true English girl that I then was, with the timidity often carried to *gaucherie*, the anxious self-consciousness, the abrupt sincerity and wild tastes, the whole earnest, sometimes harsh, sometimes interesting individuality. Lucile, with all her artless sweetness, had in her the germ of the charming finished woman of the world.

After all, I had not been more severe on her than I had upon one to whom, during these village fêtes, our attention had been directed, as one of the best and steadiest, as well as the handsomest, young men of the place — Hippolyte Langlois, now at work both at the Gérards' and our house. She told me how one day she and her sister, with a great parade of application, took their chairs and their books and work out on the lawn, but after an hour or so's apparent studiousness all they got by it was that this young *ouvrier* called out in an innocent manner to his fellow-workmen, "Dites donc, Maurice, n'est-ce pas une belle chose que la fainéantise *bien pratiquée?*"

Just now this young village wit is, as I said, an object of interest to us, on account of the fêtes which are beginning at Les Rosiers, and of which our respective *bonnes*, Honorine and Louise, are the most distinguished ornaments. We sympathize warmly with their dresses and their successes, and, like grave and experienced *chaperonnes*, discuss the characters and fortunes of their admirers.

The fête, for which all the world is now preparing, is that of St. Eustache, the patron saint of our little church, and is the most important in the year except the Fête-Dieu, which took place in June. There will be a *grande messe* in the morning, with a ball in the evening; our *propriétaires* have invited a number of people for that week, and the dignity of the church proceedings will be enhanced by the presence of the Archbishop of Chalcedoine — in what *partibus infidelium* situated my geography books do not inform me, but I conclude Asia Minor — who is come to stay with M. le Curé.

The said curé called one afternoon, his object being to borrow a crimson cushion for use in the church of monseigneur the archbishop. The prelate is a Smyrniote by birth, and has a negro servant whom he bought in the slave-

market of Smyrna, and whose face is marked with three scars, inflicted by his mother at his birth, which, it seems, is the fashion of the boys of the tribe to which he belonged. The curé is a meek little man, whose relations are among the peasantry of the village, his niece having married the village tailor. We see his small, straight, black figure from time to time stealing along our garden walks, through the trees, and sometimes into the house, with the stealthy quietness of his class. The gliding, black-robed form looks strange to us Protestants; but I perfectly acquit this peaceable little priest of any designs towards our conversion or destruction. The Sunday before the fête we had a business visit from M. le Bedeau (beadle), M. le Maire, and M. le Tailleur. Their object was to collect a new black coat for the beadle—not before it is wanted, as I can testify. He came humbly in a blouse, and therefore did not present the petition himself, that being appropriately done by the tailor.

But our chief interest at present is about the toilet of our Honorine for the evening dance, which is a grand event in her quiet, contented, hard-working life. And here we can not help noticing that a change has gradually been coming over her. In spite of her Parisian

scorn for the *paysans*, there is one blouse whom I had early noticed as more frequently than the others passing our drawing-room to the kitchen on errands that seem to me somewhat frivolous, who stays longer, at parting repeats more often, and in softer tones, the "Bonjour, mademoiselle"—a blouse whom, in short, as Sibyl expresses it, she has found too blue for her peace. The symptoms are, she now wears constantly her best dress, and that lace cap, with its coquette ribbons, for which she paid six francs; and sometimes, like us, she has a tea-rose in her band, when, her day's work done, she wanders about the garden with the white kitten in her arms. Also I meet her on the stairs, too deeply preoccupied to see me, moving without her usual buoyant activity; and when I rally her on her "air sérieux," she can only repeat, hurriedly, "Mais, mademoiselle; je pensais." I connect all this with the secret excitement, veiled in laughter, with which she told me of "deux messieurs" in the village who had engaged her as a partner for this fête a month beforehand. The person whom I suspect is of course Hippolyte Langlois, the peasant-proprietor's son: at any rate, he is always the person meant when she speaks casually of "un jeune monsieur," and

is certainly a legitimate object of attraction. It is proudly told of him that at the conscription three years ago he was drawn, and bought off at the unusally high sum of one thousand three hundred francs, on account of his superior physical qualifications; this shows, too, his value to his family.

Well, we questioned Honorine about her toilet, and found she had nothing but an old, faded, pink cotton gown, and was too economical to buy another. So we have done our best to make her *belle*, by buying a very pretty gay blue print, that looks like muslin, and gives her great satisfaction; and the curé's niece is set to work at once to make it up. Likewise I gave her a commission to Versailles to get herself small additional items; she is so grateful and easily satisfied that it is a pleasure to help her.

The great day of the fête began, unfortunately, with pouring rain, much, I fear, to the detriment of the chateau arrangements (*we* are the chateau, I should observe). These, however, have gone on with great bustle and energy all the day; servants, gardeners, workmen, pass our windows every moment, carrying down the materials for a grand dinner in the billiard-house on the second terrace, where,

fortunately for us, the revels are to be held. First, our great dining-table is borrowed; then the unjustly seized piano is hauled down through the soaking rain, and a confusion of French voices raised to their highest pitch. From time to time carriages drive in, and discharge ladies in gay dresses, prepared for a holiday in the country. M. and Madame Charlier, *en grande tenue*, equal to the occasion, and apparently in the highest spirits, pass to and fro, and civilly ask us to join their party at tea, which we civilly decline, having a better fête in view—that of the villagers in the Place.

The village, too, is getting on with its preparations for the *grande messe* and the fête. The former was preceded by a procession of children, the first sign of which was in the gardener's cottage, which, I should mention, has now new occupants, as our musical and choleric friend has been dismissed, and a good old couple with a pretty little son and daughter installed instead. I looked in, and found the mother putting the last touches to little Augustine's toilet, as she was to join the procession. The white garland which was to crown her was hanging up; I tried it on for a moment, which produced a burst of delighted

laughter from all present, even the gardener joining, as they declared "Mademoiselle va se marier!" and explained that it was a bridal wreath. The gardener's wife showed me her own bridal bouquet of white flowers, and wreath of orange-buds, kept under a glass case, and said, "Quand Augustine se mariera, si le bon Dieu le permette, elle portera une couronne et un bouquet comme ça." Then she began with great animation telling me about village weddings: the *fêtes des noces* last two days; dancing is kept up till four o'clock in the morning. She promised to inform me when next a wedding takes place, that we may see it.

Meanwhile, Augustine's toilet was finished; and very pretty the little thing looked, in her fresh white frock of cambric muslin, with her smooth golden-brown hair wreathed with white flowers, and her little feet in tiny gray boots. She held in her hand a basket of roses, which her mother was showing her how to fling, as she would have to do; and she, first a little pale with timidity, then blushing as we looked at her and praised her dress, flew off like a little bird to the church. I staid a moment to finish the chat with the *jardinière*, Augustine having joined the party, as well as the

little boy Alexandre, in his blouse, still prettier than his sister, who listened with evident enjoyment to the conversation. They were all at full laughing and screaming pitch; the *jardinière*, honest woman! has a particularly good-humored unmusical cackle.

I followed to the church with Honorine, and found the village preparing for the great event —that is to say, suspending clean sheets on a line by wooden pegs, just as if it were washing-day, all along the street. Some of the sheets had a rose or a bunch of sweet peas stuck into the middle of them, but that was all.

We found the little church gayer and prettier than we had expected, with flowers, pictures, candles, and crucifixes, and the little girls in white seated in order. There stood the curé at the altar, in his chasuble of crimson brocade, with a great gold cross down his back; and the Archbishop of Chalcedoine sat beside the altar, in his cope of purple watered silk, with his face darkened by Southern suns, his gleaming good-humored eyes, his portly figure, and a fine diamond ring. And there was the *bedeau* in the new coat to which *we* had contributed our mite.

There was chanting of the howling descrip-

tion, a short *prône*, and the usual ceremonies, done more gorgeously in Paris churches, the young choristers, in red and white costume, chanting, flinging the censer, ringing the bell, bearing tapers, which it was pretty to see the little ones trying in vain to hold upright. At last the procession moved forth, three priests carrying the Host, whose crimson canopies were decked at each corner with paper cut to look like plumes, the priests' dresses looking like bedroom curtains cut up into copes and stoles, and their faces certainly not ideal. A man in black and white robes, and spectacles, performed the chanting in fearful wise. Then followed the twelve white-robed little girls, throwing flowers, and I observed little Augustine looking first carefully at the others, to see how they did it. At one or two stations, or *reposoirs* as they are called, the train stopped and knelt, the white muslins taking care not to spoil their freshness, and only pretending to kneel.

At two o'clock came the ceremony of carrying round the *gâteau*, made of *pain bénit*. A separate one is carried to each house; but, as it is merely looked at and paid for, it is, I suppose, only a way of raising contributions for the Church. The office of carrying round the

cake is eagerly sought for by the young men, who make a great deal of amusement out of it. This time the cake, which, in consideration of our religious scruples, was not blessed before it was brought to us, was carried by the young mason in full dress, blushing a great deal, and Honorine of course stood by us, conscious and interested.

At half-past eight in the evening Honorine went to her fête, accompanied, at her request, by us. We could not persuade her to go earlier, as she was determined to finish all her work for us, and get our tea ready first. She wore her gay blue print, in all its first gloss and freshness, with short hanging sleeves and lace cuffs, a nice steel brooch, yellow silk gloves, a handkerchief which I perfumed for her with eau-de-cologne, neat gray *brodequins*, and her dark hair beautifully done, with its plaited coils behind and its smooth braids in front. We eyed her all over, and agreed that the right effect had been produced. She looked fresh and well-dressed without being fine, and her pleased, modest looks were in keeping. Her personal attractions, besides, are youth, health, a fresh complexion, and animated eyes.

So we set out for the place where the tent

had been put up. The ground was laid with planks, benches were set all round, lamps hung from the ceiling, and some thirty people collected and dancing quadrilles—the only dance practiced by French country people—to very lively airs from a double-bass, cornet-à-piston, and violin.

The young mason, who seemed to act as steward, met us at the entrance; he was dressed like a gentleman, and so did not look quite so well as in his blue blouse. He spoke to Honorine, his long-engaged partner, but her lateness caused him to be engaged with several others already. We found our way to a bench, and for some time she had to sit still with us; I was in pain for her, lest the only two partners she had secured should fail her, and all her nice toilet and her happy expectations come to nothing. In time she too began to look a little anxious, as the dance grew gayer and more strenuous, and more people dropped in, but no partner appeared.

In the mean while, I must confess, the dancing was more lively than elegant, the usual step being a galop, with various attitudes and additions not recognized in salons, and sometimes breaking into a decided romp. The women were generally neat, though not pretty

(even the good-looking ones here so soon grow hard-favored); some were in flounced clear muslin with sashes, but most in light-colored *indienne* and *percaline*. They were generally very quiet: a few, who made themselves conspicuous, came, I was told, from Paris and Versailles. The men danced with their hats on (lest in that mixed assemblage there might be some unscrupulous characters), in good time, executing their steps very carefully, and with great energy, but with an entire absence of lightness and grace. They rushed, stamped, kicked, and figured about till the effect was perfectly grotesque.

At last, to my joy, the long quadrille was ended; there was a rest. Another began to form, and then the tall young Hippolyte approaches, takes off his hat, makes a low bow, and murmurs a few words with the respectful *empressement* of French gallantry. He offers his arm; Honorine is too shy or too pleased to say any thing; but she blushes and smiles, and is led off, looking modestly happy. And now I am at leisure to notice the rest, and chat over balls in general, and this in particular, with the three Gérard ladies, who have just come in.

Among the spectators was the archbishop's

negro servant, whom the old women of the village facetiously called M. le Blanc; he stood up tall, conspicuously black, and even more conspicuously ugly. He was very much at his ease, talking and playing the fine gentleman. They offered to introduce him to a damsel in want of a partner, but he answered magnificently, "Soyez tranquilles; je ne veux pas danser," and continued his discourse. Then there was a *demi-monsieur*, as Lucile with much disapprobation pronounced him, mustached and bearded, with a gold chain, full of airs, and dancing disagreeably—probably a Paris *commis-marchand*. M. le Tailleur was there, tall and large, in a gray wide-awake, and gray coat and trowsers, as his manner is, dancing very joyously, and a great deal with his pretty little wife. I watched to see how Honorine performed, and soon recognized her, looking all modest, natural reserve, dancing quietly and well, and no way conspicuous, save for good behavior. I was amused, in the intervals of the dances, to see the young men whispering and flirting, and admiring their partner's bouquets, just as they do in salons. But the prettiest sight was that of half a dozen children, Augustine among them, in the white frocks of the morning, and their pretty little caps, dan-

cing in the glee of their heart spontaneous dances invented by themselves.

Mademoiselle Lucile has, as she owns, the true French passion for dancing. She was never regularly taught till last winter, though her sister and she had learned the polka step merely from seeing it once danced by bears on the stage. I complimented her on the distinguished grace she must have acquired from her *professeur*, M. l'Ours. She has not yet been to any balls, and indeed at seventeen there is time before her.

We went away when the room grew hot, and the dancing furious. Honorine returned at two o'clock, after an evening of much success, having danced four times with the young mason, besides having promised two others for the next evening, which was to close the fête. She highly disapproved of the manners of the town importations, and said she never went to public balls at Paris because of these *mauvaises habitudes*, which there could not be escaped from.

Some time after the fête of St. Eustache, Honorine told us of a *bal de noces* that was to take place in the village. The occasion was the marriage of Mademoiselle Allard, daughter to the *aubergiste* of L'Étoile du Nord, to an ar-

chitect of Paris. The bride, who has delighted Honorine and Louise with a special invitation, is a pretty girl of eighteen; she has had many offers, but prefers this one, and has made, we are told, a regular love-match, that wonder and joy of all French female hearts. Now came a toilet anxiety; at a wedding-ball it is *de rigueur* for a *demoiselle* to wear white muslin. Honorine is too good a Frenchwoman to think of violating the *convenances;* but she has no white muslin dress, and no time to buy and make up one. I consulted Mademoiselle Gérard, and resolved to do what she proposed for Louise — to lend a muslin skirt for the occasion. Never was offer more welcome, or more gratefully accepted, Honorine explaining, with true French tact, that the invitation was a compliment to *us*, as they scarcely knew her, and she wished to do us credit on the occasion.

But, alas! next day came a letter summoning Honorine to her dying mother in Picardy. It was dictated by the poor woman, and was as follows:

"MA CHÈRE FILLE,—Je te souhaite le bonjour et en même temps pour m'informer de ta santé. Quant à moi, il faut me lever à deux et me coucher à deux; voilà quinze jours que

cela m'a pris. Ma pauvre fille, je suis dans une triste position. Ma pauvre Honorine, si tu voulais venir me voir avant de mourir, cela me ferait un plaisir sensible, surtout, ma pauvre fille, je voudrais te voir avant de mourir, car je suis dans une triste position. Rien à te dire pour le moment que des compliments; surtout, ma fille, viens, je t'en supplie.

"JOSÉPHINE ROSIER."

So here ended poor Honorine's expected fête; she went off tearful but quiet, thinking of us, and arranging things for us, even amidst the hurry of her departure. Lucile candidly wished that the letter had come a day later, that the poor girl might have had her ball first, especially as Louise, unless she can get some other companion, will not go. Frenchwomen of all classes are, it appears, exceedingly particular about proper chaperonage.

On coming in from a walk we were invited by Madame Allard to step in and see the wedding dinner and the bride. The latter was seated at a little table apart, with the bridegroom, his friend, and her *demoiselle d'honneur*, while at the large table they were singing songs. She looked pretty in her bridal dress, as well as extremely frightened.

Honorine came back in a day or two in mourning, for her mother was dead. She was much subdued, and had lost all vivacity of manner, but she set to work in her usual indefatigable way.

The first subject in our present world in which she began to express again some interest was poor Zélie, who had been to me always an interesting and touching, though rather unknown, personage. She was the wife of the ex-gardener, who, having acquired a general character for drinking, incurring debts, quarrelling, and giving offense, had been dismissed; but, as they had for the present no situation, M. Charlier allowed them to inhabit the little unused building, called the *manége*, at the bottom of the prairie. Most of the young women about here have a melancholy, suffering expression, but Zélie's is that of despondency. She is a small, delicate figure, with a pale-brown face; always at work, always quiet, keeping to herself, smiling gently with that meek, sad face when spoken to, and answering in a sweet, low voice, very unlike the usual tones of her class, and especially those of her boisterous husband. When first I saw her I thought she was one whose lot in life had been blighted, and Honorine says that she was

forced five years ago to marry this man, and had never been happy since.

I asked if she had loved another; Honòrine did not know, but thought it likely, because she had once heard her say, "It's a great misfortune to love, because sometimes one does not marry the person one loves, but picks up somebody one does not love — and then one is *mal mariée*." She looks older than she is, "à cause," says Honorine, "de ses chagrins." Heaven forgive me! but when the other day her husband fell from the cherry-tree and lay a moment stunned on the ground, though she ran up and stood gravely and silently looking at him, it did cross my mind—I knew not why —that it would not be her worst misfortune if that fall set her free from her wedded state, and that perhaps she thought so too. Anyhow, her conduct is irreproachable; she lives only for her duties, and one never catches "un mot plus haut qu'un autre."

Poor thing! she has no children to console her; instead of which she takes great care of the animals, who are her constant society. The other day, seeing the door of the cottage where they then lived open, and no one visible, I looked in; it was so beautifully clean, so still, empty, and peaceful, with the large fire-place,

the neat curtained bed, the clean brick floor, the few tables and chairs so well arranged. As I stood admiring, a voice asked me if I wanted any thing, and there, at the window behind the door, sat Zélie working, and there probably she had been working for hours, in the only enjoyment which her weary body and spirit seemed to seek—rest and calm.

Zélie's sad story dwelt in my mind, and I went to visit her in her wretched quarters—the *manége.* This building consisted of a square stone tower, very ruinous, of which the ground-floor was a large, dreary, dark room, earthen-floored, with naked stone walls, and a few arched grated holes for windows. Here once was the windlass which, turned by a horse, conveyed the water from a tank close by up to the house, but now the over-toiled horse was dead, and a woman fetched it.

I began to ascend the dark, steep, narrow, broken stairs, to which there seemed no end, without coming to any thing, till, from the very top, I heard Zélie's voice. She welcomed me to the shabby loft, turned by her neat arrangement of their furniture into a bedroom; but she said that it was very *triste* all alone there, that she heard the wind all night, and that it made her head ache. Her husband is much

given to staying out all night, and so she is left to the solitude of her own sad thoughts, which, unoccupied as she is now, must be terrible. I invited her to come up and sit with Honorine in the evening, and, seeing a pretty book on the table, which she said had been lent her by the young Julie, I determined to add to her store. She said she was extremely fond of reading, and had plenty of time for it now. There was not the least complaining in her manner; she seemed to like the visit, and thanked me much.

To vary to a livelier subject—there was soon another wedding in the village, which, of course, Honorine begged us to come and see with her. It was that of a young man named Brou, son to our *porteuse d'eau*, whose sister has married the village tailor, nephew to the curé; the bride is Renée, nursery-maid in a *bourgeois* family of Montbrun, with, as it happened, no connections at all, being an *enfant trouvée*, whose parents had never been discovered. It was not a grand affair, and there were to be no *noces*—that is to say, no dinner and ball.

On arriving at the little Place, we found that the wedding party were inside the *mairie*, getting through the previous civil marriage;

we waited therefore at the door. There was a long delay at the *mairie*, owing to difficulty in finding papers, the usual preliminary formula—which makes the civil marriage in Paris a very short affair—not having been gone through. This was owing, not only to provincial awkwardness, but to difficulties made by the father, who disliked the match, and would now do nothing to help it—all out of pure *méchanceté*, it was said.

The young man came out and ran off to fetch some paper or other. "Voyez! il pleure," said Honorine: "c'est parce que son père a fait des difficultés; ce mariage ne s'arrangera pas vite." He was a gentle, quiet, rather timid-looking young man, with smooth straight black hair, a black coat, and a red rose at his button-hole. We criticised the color of his coat; the Charliers' maid-servant, who had joined us, a fat, fair, vicious-looking young creature, shutting one eye languishingly, and munching something, after her invariable custom, gave *her* vote peremptorily for black, as the most *distingué*. I liked the young man's appearance, but it seems he is in some disrepute, having refused to pay a wager of five francs which he had lost to another young man of the village on the subject of his marriage—a "vrai scan-

dale," as Honorine remarked. The wager took place at the fête of St. Eustache, whither Renée the bride had come, and there first made acquaintance with young Brou.

At last the bridal *cortége* began to assemble. The bridegroom's two sisters, round-faced country maidens, blooming and smiling, saucy and coquettish, in white jaconet, blue sashes, and lace caps, appeared, carrying a banner with a pictured Virgin upon it; this was for the bride. Then came the *bedeau*, in *grande tenue!* the new black coat, gay cane, cocked hat, great steel chain, gold ear-rings embellishing a face of most grotesque ugliness. He carried a banner, inscribed "St. Eustache." The saucy maidens teased him incessantly, criticising every thing he did, and mocking at him unmercifully, he opposing to them a face and manner so ridiculously angry as must have much encouraged them to go on. They chiefly abused the way he carried his banner, managing their own with active rustic grace, and looking very *piquantes* in their scornful liveliness and confidence.

And now the wedding party was under way — bride and bridegroom hand-in-hand with lifted arms, he taking tender care of the bride's veil. She was in a white robe, with a long

white veil and wreath of orange-buds, but, oh grief! she was old for a Frenchwoman—that is to say, twenty-five, plain and homely, with a thick figure, a broad face, red, not blushing, trying to get up an air of becoming bashfulness, and looking all the worse for her tight finery. The bride and bridegroom knelt at the altar before two great tapers; the rest of the party sat round. There was the gray-haired *maire;* one of the sisters, as *demoiselle d'honneur;* and, curiously enough, the bridegroom's father and mother, who have long been separated, now met, but sat apart. I knew the father at once by his face and bearing; he sat at the farther end, not in the circle round the altar, never once looking at the bridal pair, with a hard, surly, contemptuous face, that never changed nor smiled. His wife, a good, hard-working creature, told us once that he had *mangé* all they had, and driven her out-of-doors by force of his *bêtises*, which had beggared his family. The bride wept much; the bridegroom also was moved; the gay sisters kept on, even there, persecuting the unfortunate *bedeau* in a sly way—for example, when he was folding up the canopy which he had held over the heads of the pair, which they evidently thought he was doing very badly.

The service was wonderfully long and dull, though the marriage ceremony itself was short; the priest addressed them as monsieur and mademoiselle, the ring was given and put on, and, after nearly two hours' endurance, they went into the *sacristie* to finish there, and we took our departure.

I had wished the bridegroom a fairer and more winning lady-love, but the history Honorine gave afterwards took off from his attractions. It seems that, besides refusing to pay his wager, he had still more exasperated the same young man by having "dit de gros propos au sujet de Mademoiselle Louise" (the Gérards' *bonne*), whom he had sneered at as a cook: "chose ridicule," says Honorine, with much *esprit de corps*, "when all the world knows that a cuisinière is much more distinguée than a bonne d'enfants, as Renée had been."

Moreover, he had even had the bad taste to ridicule Julie's personal appearance, on account of her *embonpoint* — and this the other young man could not stand. So young Brou was kicked, knocked down, struck on the face, which latter was so *abîmé* that he was obliged to keep his bed two days; and all this happened six days before the wedding, and in the Place before all the world, so that *prêtre*, *maire*,

and *garde-champêtre* had to interpose and separate the combatants. The victor would have gone to prison but for his superior position and character, which influenced people in his favor.

"It seems," said I, with a wonderful flash of sagacity, "that this young man is a lover of Mademoiselle Louise's."

"Justement, mademoiselle; c'est son amoureux."

"Qui est-il donc?" was the next demand.

Honorine laughed, colored excessively, and would only reply, "C'est un jeune homme du village."

"You will not tell me his name; but I shall soon learn it."

"C'est possible," she said, laughing and coloring still more; and no doubt was left on my mind that the champion was the young village hero, Hippolyte Langlois. I should not have expected such fiery *élans* from that gentle, smiling face; but where there is so much brightness and honesty, spirit can not be wanting. I suspect young Brou's spite to have been the fruit of a rejection by the fair Louise. The young men are of the same trade, but while Langlois works here under his father, the master-mason, Brou works for some one

at Versailles. A beaten bridegroom is not an imposing figure, and certainly the young man looked as if conscious of humiliation.

"Did you remark," said Honorine, presently, "how pale M. le Curé was? C'est que lui aussi, il a été frappé; un autre jeune homme, de Montbrun, a dit des bêtises sur cette demoiselle (la mariée) et, ce qui est pis, sur ses maîtres. Alors M. le Curé lui a fait une bonne remontrance; mais, au lieu de se soumettre, il a pris M. le Curé par le devant de sa soutane et l'a poussé dans l'estomac. Some think," continued Honorine, whose bias is evidently against the bridegroom, the *curé*, and their set, "that it does not become a priest to mix in quarrels, that his only business is in the church or the house; for me, I know nothing of it, but I find it very ill-mannered to strike a priest like that." Poor little M. le Curé! No doubt his personal appearance and his humble connections do not inspire much respect, but I am sorry he should be beaten.

There is to-night a little dance at the Mère du Bois, but wind and rain deter us, nor is Honorine eager to go, seeing that the young mason will not be there. I told her plainly who I suspected the nameless young man to be, and she acknowledged it very gayly.

"So then he is Louise's admirer? But, Honorine, I thought he was a little yours?"

"Oh non, mademoiselle, il ne l'est pas; je n'ai jamais eu cette prétention—et que voulez-vous? Mademoiselle Louise a été ici deux ans, et ce n'est pas pour moi, la dernière-venue, de lui enlever ses bons amis."

"Mais quelquefois, ça arrive sans que l'on s'en doute."

"Oui, mademoiselle, s'il m'aime, je ne puis pas l'empêcher, mais je ne ferais rien pour le détacher d'elle."

All this conversation was evidently highly pleasing to the girl, so that I remained a little in doubt as to how matters really stood. I confess my reason rather resisted the idea that Honorine had carried it against the much prettier and younger Louise.

Enough for the present of village gossip. I must return a little to Sibyl and myself.

CHAPTER XIV.

AUTUMN DAYS.

WE came, as I have said, to this summer nest of Les Rosiers, expecting and intending to find our life very retired, and to depend on our own resources. For, besides that society, there was next to none around us, and we were not rich enough to entertain, except in very moderate degree. The Paris world, at least *our* Paris world, was generally flown, to the Pyrenees, to England, to Switzerland—in a hundred different directions.

At first, however, especially when Horace was with us—and a great comfort and aid was the presence of that good, grave man to us—our quiet weeks were broken every now and then by a guest for the day or the night; and I, for my part, was very happy. Alone or with visitors, every day of that new life was to me like a page of a novel, traced by summer sunbeams on a green ground, and I wondered that Sibyl did not seem to feel as I did. She who had cared so moderately for Paris gayeties, who I knew so dearly loved fresh air

and trees and flowers, why did she seem—not exactly unhappy, but a little *triste* and *distraite?*

Our most frequent guests for the first month or two were M. Émile, who, as a near connection, had a kind of right to come, but whose military duties necessarily left large intervals between his visits; and another, a very different person, the handsome Marquis de Clérimont, whom I mentioned as an acquaintance out of the Faubourg St. Germain. In Paris our intercourse had been very slight, but it turned out that he had a chateau some ten miles off, and used consequently to ride over to us every now and then on some pretext or other.

I confess Émile's visits were much more interesting to me, whatever they were to Sibyl. It was with agreeable expectation that I used, from the great walnut-tree at the top of the prairie, to look out for him entering by the little gate in the wall, and quickly ascending through the orchard to our breezy seat. He brought with him a thousand piquant sensations: fresh from the world we had forsaken, and from the strenuous and vivid interests of a larger and more busy life, he yet threw himself intensely into our innocent country do-

ings. Our custom was to loiter through the hot bright hours in the garden, under the shade of the lime and catalpas, we making use of him to gather the forbidden roses and jessamines, which he, a privileged favorite, dared do, without rebuke. Or we rested in the large, airy drawing-room, when Sibyl would sometimes sing and play, and I paint flowers, and our guest talk all manner of talk, literary, philosophic, political; or simply poetic, friendly, and tender. He had a wonderful store of tales drawn from real life, from his own or other people's adventures, mostly, I am bound to say, of a tragic description, especially those relating to love. He was a strange character; manly as he was, one could talk to him as if he were a sister. No one made more day-dreams out of the flowers and sunshine and songs of the birds than he; and he entered into all our little fancies and feelings as no Englishman, unless he were a professed poet or a very young, dreaming, soft-hearted man, could do. When the day grew cool our long rambles began, in the prairies, through the woods, by the stream in the valleys, and our sittings on our favorite birch-crowned knoll from gold sunset to gray twilight. Or we wandered through the corn-fields, and he gath-

ered the flowers, inhaled with delight the odor of the neighboring pine-groves, and recalled the days of his childhood.

Then we returned to a late tea, and after that found ourselves again in the orange-perfumed garden, under the moonlight, strolling through walks and bowers of alternate light and shade, till, perhaps, it was too late for him to catch the night train back, and he had to put up with a little room on the *second*, if he could get it, or a bed at the "Étoile du Nord."

There was in one respect a change. M. Émile talked a great deal more to me in particular. Whether it was that he found Sibyl inaccessible, I do not know, but she certainly seemed to avoid him; at any rate, she devoted herself mostly to her little May, and left him quite contentedly to me.

In consequence of this, I suppose, I never found him so engaging as now. He talks more seriously and confidentially to me than he used to do; it is true he also somewhat patronizes me, and will laughingly call me *enfant* in all the condescending scorn of his six or seven more years. I feel him justified, for there is a grave manliness of air and tone of thought growing upon him, owing, no doubt, to increased professional responsibility. He

has lately risen — by force of necessity, it seems, not favor — to a somewhat higher, at any rate a more active and anxious, official position; and the habit of command has certainly come upon him.

Besides patronizing, he also lectures me; we are by no means always on silk and velvet terms; our weapons of national and personal warfare are sometimes sufficiently sharp, and I hear dignified reprimands of my English *raideur* and prejudice, and hints that, from my pride and obstinacy, had I been then in heaven I should certainly have been one of the angels who fell. Nor is the habitual mild and quiet manner quite invariable; he will sometimes abuse the emperor, and even his own nation, in language of military fervor, and then beg pardon for his energy, and own that, though he says such things himself, he should not like to hear them from a foreigner.

In spite of these occasional vivacities, however, his habitual bearing is that of a grave, though subdued, sadness, far more decided than ever it used to be, which is accounted for by the state of his country — regarding it, as he does, as that of final and hopeless degradation — and of his own professional prospects. Loving his profession as he does, he continues to

serve; but he looks forward to no promotion, he says, nor does he regret it; the second of December had closed his personal and political future. Few careers, he observed once, destined to so early and complete a close, had opened more promisingly. While still quite young, he had accepted a commission which isolated him for two years in a lonely mountain district, making fortifications—a work of some novelty and difficulty, the bestowal of which on him had been no slight compliment, and which it was expected would be followed by distinction and rapid promotion; but he had professional enemies, who had taken advantage of his two years' absence to do him mischief; I suppose the weapon made use of was the Republicanism which the young *militaire* had always frankly avowed.

In spite of his dash of melancholy, however, his visits were to me the great pleasure of our country life, the chief drawback being their uncertainty, and the frequent prolonged absence caused by his military duties, and his extreme dislike to ask favors of a superior, who would very likely refuse merely for the pleasure of refusing.

Another drawback, to me at least, were the visits of the handsome marquis. Their motive

was quite obvious: the attraction, began in the *soirées* of the Faubourg St. Germain, had deepened, and the determined lady-killer was doing his best to captivate my sister. My prejudice against him was such that, knowing his reputation, and always finding something false and hollow in his soft tones and sweet, sad smiles, I could hardly give him credit for sincerity in his suit to Sibyl, or at any rate for even a purpose of constancy. But I am bound to say he acted earnestness in a way that might deceive any one; I thought, too, that Sibyl was attracted, interested, even touched. In her slight delicate way she even encouraged him; in fact, I began, with infinite dismay, to surmise that she would in time love him. How could this be? He was in no way worthy of her, rank and prestige apart: though his conversation had a certain sparkle and charm, his understanding was certainly narrow and shallow; and as to his heart, I was very sure that he had none.

I said to myself that I could not have believed it of Sibyl. I knew her susceptibility to personal charms, grace of manner, and polished and witty conversation; nor was a brilliant social position indifferent to her, though she was the most disinterested person in the

world. But all this puzzled me. I longed to hint a remonstrance, but was fairly afraid of doing it; nor was I certain that I understood Sibyl, or read her aright. For with all her artless, almost child-like, frankness on some points, there were others on which her reticence was complete; and love and lovers, as personal to herself, were among these.

It was most of all annoying when the marquis and Émile happened to make their visits together. These two men were obviously quite unsuitable, and did not like each other. The marquis—the *crême de la crême* of aristocracy, whose very slight Bourbonism had accommodated itself to the present state of things, with his calm, high-born pride and self-complacence, his elegant epicurism and Lucretian *sangfroid*—and Émile, the flower of young Republicanism, ideally enthusiastic, with his dreams of devotion to cause and country, his bitter scorn of those who lived for "inglorious ease," and the something heroic which lay suppressed, but to be divined, in him—were certainly not the men to become friends. Not to mention that two Frenchmen, in the society of ladies whom each strives to please, are seldom in much charity with each other.

All then used to go on as disagreeably as

possible; the young marquis generally engrossed the conversation, and M. Émile was silent and scornful; unless, as presently became his usual resort, he conversed apart with me. Every now and then Lucile was with us on these occasions, and her bright girlish presence made a pleasant diversion. I could perceive that she liked Émile much the better of the two; indeed she frankly told me so when we were, as girls will, discussing the two men. I had seen once her look of bright young scorn when the sentimental marquis was dilating on *la coquetterie* as the most truly feminine of all the feminine attributes, without which a woman could not be complete, which was the spring of all her charms, and almost all her virtues, etc. She told me afterwards that she knew the marquis had been talking "des bêtises," but she had not cared to express any opinion of her own on the subject, though he had more than once appealed to her, not because she minded "lui marcher sur les pieds," but because "la coquetterie" was not a subject for "les jeunes filles." Of M. Émile she spoke much more respectfully and admiringly, observing, very justly, that he had "le regard doux et pur," and adding that she made no scruple of praising him to us, because he was

our "relation"—a very distant one, it must be owned, seeing that he was only the cousin to Sibyl's stepsister-in-law.

Émile, meanwhile, as if in contrast with the marquis's graceful sentimentalism, began by fits to disclose to me glimpses of fiery abysses in his nature, such as I had not expected, and which, though they might not alarm me in an Englishman, yet in a Frenchman, considering all that I knew, and more that I did not know, excited apprehension together with interest. In discussions on moral and social questions he would allow too much to passion, almost justifying even a crime that might be committed under its influence; but then he said it must be such a passion as is rarely known in life, "qui domine toute la vie," which is felt but once, and never again. I knew that he was wrong, and trusted that he was not expressing his real convictions, the more so that in calmer moods he expressed himself very differently. A profound appreciation of the excellence of purity, of domestic happiness, an ardent looking to marriage as the goal of his desires and the completion of his being, and an intense aversion to the unprincipled laxity of Parisian society, including a determination to marry only one who had been brought up to

regard domestic virtue and affection as all in all, were his leading opinions on the subject. These were so often and strongly expressed, sometimes with earnest strenuousness, sometimes as by an involuntary betrayal, and accorded so well with the habitual seriousness and imaginative refinement of his whole character, that one could not possibly suppose that in speaking thus he was but suiting his conversation to his hearer. I wished I could fully understand him.

The marquis, who seemed bent on amusing us, proposed a good many rides and drives to explore the neighborhood, in all of which M. Émile declined joining. In this manner we saw the palace of Versailles—a good specimen of majestic, symmetrical, extensive dullness outside, a vast, splendid, shining world of halls, chambers, galleries within; Port Royal—a mere handful of ruins in a deep wild dell, the hills rising like walls and towers to cover the once sacred spot, where skeletons of old gateways, broken pillars, and a quiet little old dove-cote alone remain of the ancient convent and chapel, now replaced by the vine-trellised walls and thatched roofs of the little farmhouses and cottages; La Chevreuse—an exquisite valley; and Les Granges—the home

of those thoughtful and gifted *solitaires*, whose chambers are still left just as they were.

In the midst of these pleasure excursions Émile vanished from the scene. He was dispatched by his superiors on some military survey in a distant part of the country, and could not tell us how long it would be, or when we should see him again.

In our last parting walk he was in a mood of melancholy which he seemed trying to conceal, or, when he could not do that, to disguise under fits of gayety. When I asked him if he would prefer one direction to another for our walk, he answered spiritlessly, "Here or anywhere; all is the same to me; all's right."

"Or all's wrong?" I asked, half smiling.

"Yes, all wrong," he answered, as spiritlessly as before.

"Every thing is wrong with you to-day, I think," I rejoined.

"Well, perhaps it is," he returned quickly, and seemed about to add more, but stopped.

He alluded to his professional non-prospects, and when I suggested his throwing all up, and leaving France for some more hopeful sphere, he said, "No, not till my heart is quite broken. So long as I have a gale, and my sails are not torn to pieces, I must go on; there will be

time enough afterwards to stagnate in harbor."

On my seeming still unsatisfied, he explained that no profession save that of the army was open to him, and that were he to give up his commission, it would be to quit his profession forever, and lose all hope of ever again serving his country in future, even under a government that he should approve of. "After all," he said, "I consider myself, as a soldier, in the service of my country, not of the president; I am known to profess no loyalty to him, and to be entirely aloof from politics. Should any iniquitous work be required of me, I am free to resign, and find, perhaps, in retirement and literature l'oubli du passé et l'indifférence pour l'avenir."

The marquis, on the other hand, continued his visits at the rate of once or twice a week, till he, too, was summoned away—by some call of social pleasure, no doubt. But *he* expressed intense regret, and earnestly solicited leave to renew his visits when this brief period of enforced exile was over. Sibyl gave it with her usual careless ease, and I felt I could not read her feelings at that moment.

But as time passed on, and the expected month of absence was over, and yet the ardent

lover made no sign, I noticed in Sibyl a feverish restlessness quite unlike herself, and very painful to see. It made my heart ache, and I almost wished for a renewal of the visits which had alarmed and annoyed me before.

Is there a sadder lot than to be condemned to wait in vain? How can a man ever inflict such torture on a woman's heart, if he has but the merest suspicion that he has gained it? The momentous visit has been paid, and leaves her expecting it to be renewed; she is filled with memories as yet pleasantly confused, requiring time and quiet to think over. So the week passes well, and the day of hope comes, bright, sunshiny, full of promise and dream. She wakes, feeling her heart fresh and buoyant, she puts on her most becoming toilet, she adds a flower or two, she arranges the room, she flutters about winged with pleasant thoughts, full of subdued smiles.

But he does not come—she is disappointed and damped; but it was an accident—a day is nothing—of course he will come to-morrow. No, he does not, nor the day after; time comes and goes, she is kept in suspense from day to day, till she is surprised to find how many have passed. Still she finds reasons and explanations, and the longer the delay the better

reasons she finds; but though she still expects, the spring, the charm of expectation, is broken. She wearies of putting on her pretty dress, of keeping things to do with him, of treasuring up things to say to him—things that now seem mouldering away in a useless heap in her mind; she could not say them now—they are not living, they are dead! Sometimes she will wonder, chide him in her heart, determine that if he comes now she will receive him coldly; but all this resolution is thrown away, and leaves her so depressed and worn out that she is much more likely to cry than to practice that dignified indifference.

And the worst of it is that he can not now undo the impression of his long absence; the indifference can not be explained away. At first she had consoled herself with thinking of all the tender things he had said, the tenderer ones he had implied, the tenderest of all that he had only looked—and she had felt that he had loved her. But the longer she has to think of them, the fewer they appear, the more doubtful their significance. How very few and slight they were, after all! And at last, from thinking only of how and when she should repay his love, she has come to think of him as not her lover at all!

Nervous and weary, she can not employ herself; mortified pride and shame and despondency are eating her heart's core. Days are like years; she is growing old without him! She looks no longer into her future; all is blankness and grayness there. And while she, shut up in a dreary country house, with no change, no movement, pines for the sight of one person, he is occupied, amused, in the world, free to come and see her—and he never comes.

Some divination told me that this, or something like this, was passing in Sibyl's secret soul. For though a widow, her widowhood had been, I now knew, one of those saddest griefs of all, a loss which is *not* a heart-break. Married at sixteen, and her husband dying immediately after, little May, a posthumous child, was the sweetest and almost the only trace her brief wedded life had left behind. She loved now—I was sure of it—but she kept it to herself, and would not let her sadness cloud others. She was still sweet and kindly as ever, played with her little girl, who grew and bloomed marvellously in this pure sweet air, exerted herself to talk cheerfully with me, and made herself the favorite of the whole village.

Once more Émile came to see us, unexpectedly, and when we had ceased to look for him, in the mid-autumn. He staid but a few hours, and struck me as altogether and strangely changed. To us personally he was courteous and gentle as ever, but on all other points a gloomy and bitter cynicism overwhelmed him. The state of politics, to which he just once alluded with almost fierce despair, and his own prospects, seemed to have finally conquered that once bright temperament. He told us of the hostility of his *chef immédiat*, a man who had identified himself with the present *régime*, and would therefore indulge in the rancor he had always felt against a proud, not very submissive, and avowedly Republican subordinate. This enmity had reached a point—so he was privately informed by friends—which threatened him with serious danger; at the least, his professional career might be crushed, and himself banished into obscurity. But he laughed scornfully over it all, and said he had by this time attained to such a fortunate apathy that if he were to hear that the ruler of the country were dead ("et Dieu sait," he coolly interjected, "si je l'aime") it would not make his pulse beat quicker. This indifference seemed to extend to every thing, and I doubted if he any

longer cared for us. It pained me to see him so changed; but Sibyl seemed to notice nothing. I feared it was because her thoughts were engrossed in the Marquis de Clérimont.

When Émile left, I said, with a faint hope of extracting something more definite and friendly, "Shall we see you in Paris this winter?"

"Who knows? I do not," he answered, abruptly.

"But you intend to be there, do you not?"

"I never intend any thing; I do not care enough about what becomes of me." And so we parted.

Left to ourselves, there seemed a kind of barrier between my sister and me. Sibyl's melancholy did not appear diminished; she cared for nothing but little May, who, ever bright, active, and happy, kept up glimpses of the sunny past. I too was sad, but that was my own affair; I told Sibyl nothing about it. I looked anxiously forward to the return to Paris, which I hoped might rouse her from her depression. She seemed indifferent to the prospect.

A small incident occurred to vary the stillness of our existence. A review of six cavalry regiments took place on the plains of Satory (the first of a long series of famed Napole-

onic reviews on that spot, till then known to me only for its profusion of apple-trees), and the soldiers were billeted for the night over the neighborhood. M. Charlier's share consisted of three officers and six soldiers, as well as twelve horses. The garden was soon filled with a party of horsemen; a young officer rode up, billet in hand, to the drawing-room, and addressed my sister in the usual brusque, word-saving style of his class, which I suppose originated the epithet *cavalier*—"Madame, M. Charlier?"

But the worthy proprietor was gone to Paris, to escape, I suppose, his compulsory guests; so they had to arrange with his respected and grim old mother. The *billets de logement* had been made out by the *maire;* the business was conducted by the tall bulky *maréchal des logis*, with his coarse voice and bluff manners. He complained that there was not room for the horses; and the result was all that noise and length of discussion which the French seem to find indispensable—every body coming up to join in it.

Then came the question—to them, I imagine, a most important one—their dinner. They coolly asked for the bill of fare, which they did not consider satisfactory. The house was

not provisioned to meet the vast demands of three herculean young cavalry officers—I suspect the deficiency was intentional—and they wisely determined to dine at Versailles. I dare say, too, they felt out of luck at being assigned quarters where there were no good fellows nor *jolies dames* to bear them company. We, the only lodgers in the house, kept religiously to our own apartments, but watched, at a respectful distance, the stabling of horses, the doffing and donning of uniforms, the picketing of lances, the loud, brief calls and gruff voices of our gallant friends. The little Victor, the small nephew of our *propriétaire*, ran about among them, sharing in their proceedings with that serious sympathy and sense of partnership felt by every male animal in France, of the smallest size, with red coats and swords. Once or twice we, too, met some dragoons riding, and were abruptly asked, "Pardon, madame—pour aller à St. Marc?" or were saluted at the door by the three young officers, who bowed and waved their caps round their heads with a grave extravagance of courtesy. They are handsome youths, with brown curling mustaches and beards, fair fresh faces, and an appearance of gay, reckless spirits.

The last time I had seen any great number

of French military was at the *coup d'état*, when, before related, several regiments of cavalry and the line bivouacked in the Champs Élysées. I must confess, though one is reminded by such scenes of the capture of towns, that these formidable beings were here very tame and quiet, and seemed not to have the remotest intention to *égorger* little Victor, or insult old madame, called the "terrier."

The evening was spent jollily by the six privates at dinner in the gardener's cottage; the officers, I presume, were no less jolly at Versailles. Honorine, who does not *ménager* her words, unhesitatingly pronounces all these *militaires* "très gourmands." She alone, of all the *bonnes* here, has not found it necessary to hold any intercourse with them. One very young officer was quartered all alone at the Gérards', the family being absent, and the house kept by an old *gouvernante* and Louise. The poor boy found it so dull that he went to bed at six o'clock. Louise, however, was charmed with his pretty face, pronouncing him an "amour d'officier," and with his politeness, for he expressed much regret at inconveniencing them.

At midnight returned our friends from Versailles in an excess of good spirits. They had

to wait long at the door before it was unlocked, and amused themselves with talking to the kitten and the gardener's wife. They were not at all tipsy, but simply light-hearted, chattering like children, and laughing at nothing at all.

Next morning we lost our guests; a soldier was brushing his officer's uniform all the morning outside our door, and talking to himself over it; and finally they rode forth, giving the last bright look to our quiet bowers, as their red plumes, polished shakos, the shining lances and tricolor flags, and the dark-blue uniforms, with white sashes and facings, glanced through the yellowing shrubberies. Little Victor was appropriately solemn as he looked his last at those who, in the course of a day and night, had become his sworn friends; and M. Charlier, who had reappeared, in his wide-awake, with his broad back and shoulders, flung wide open the *porte-cochère* in a state of very genuine satisfaction.

In the intervals of such manly pleasures as these, little Victor condescended to cultivate me. He came down only a day ago; but, being no shyer than most French children, approached our window at once, addressed us on the subject of the white kitten, furnished his

name, age, and parentage, and promised to be an excellent friend of mine. He presently inquired what I was going to do, seemed disappointed when I told him that I was going to be very busy, and finally found himself, to his entire delight, established beside my table, using my paints upon the men, horses, and houses I had drawn for him, and making all manner of wonderful discoveries in the science of color. While busy with the house, he asked me to "arranger" for him "un petit paysage." I said I should not have time to do it that morning, whereon he shrewdly observed, "You can be doing it now, instead of looking at me, while I finish the house." Finally the modesty of true genius came upon him, and he inquired, doubtfully, "Tout ce que je fais, ce n'est qu'un barbouillement, n'est-ce pas?"

Soon after he brought me a paper of pictures containing the history of Punch, which he read to me very fluently, with various judicious comments, such as, when I observed, "You see this wicked Punch would not let himself be punished, but hanged the *bourreau* instead," "Pourquoi non," he asked, "since the executioner was going to hang *him?*" "Mais," he observed, finally, with great satisfaction, "le diable était plus fort que lui." A

great part of his time he spent in playing with our little May, of whom he was passionately fond, and whom he patronized with all the wisdom of six years.

The young Julie, who used to interest me, seemed, alas! being gradually spoiled by her corrupt elder associates, and had acquired a bold unchild-like expression in her once innocent eyes. Her mother, poor woman! whom we sometimes met in the prairie on the watch for her worthless husband's return from Paris, complained to us that her child was quite spoiled, that she was all day idling with bad companions, that her father let her do just as she pleased, and that she had learned to disregard and disobey her mother. About this time the whole party left finally for Paris, and so this group of Bohemians vanished from our path of life.

Nothing after this occurred save the regular progress of defacement and decay in all nature —yellowed and bare trees, weeping skies sheeted with dusk clouds, wild howling winds, that screamed through those ill-secured doors and windows, and made one lie drearily awake at night. I confess I looked anxiously forward to a return to that bright centre of life, sumptuous, sparkling, bewitching Paris. We pur-

posed to be there by the end of November if we could find an *appartement.* The only one, I suspected, who would not be glad to leave was Honorine, who led here a very agreeable life, with plenty of air, exercise, freedom, and society, especially that of the young mason. It seemed he had now fairly settled the question between her and Louise, and that his preference was no longer doubtful. Poor Louise was very unhappy; her once smiling, blooming face became dark and sad. "Pauvre fille," said Honorine, compassionately, "elle est bien troublée." But I suppose no unfair arts had been used to supplant her, as the friendship continued undiminished, and Louise was as frequently in Honorine's kitchen as ever, till she went with her *maîtres* to Paris. Honorine then wandered pensively about, carrying the cat as a "petite société," and owning to feeling *ennuyée.*

It appeared that, though the young man had made no explicit declaration to either, Honorine had the parents in her favor. They constantly invited and encouraged her, and told her they should much prefer *her* to Louise as a daughter-in-law. Perhaps Louise being Swiss and Protestant had something to do with it; also, though much the prettier, she was less act-

ive and laborious than Honorine, and was often not neatly *chaussée*, which is a point of the utmost importance to the French mind, high and low.

What Honorine's secret feelings might be she had too much feminine *finesse* to betray. She went about her work cheerfully and stoutly as ever, and seemed completely mistress of her will and thoughts. Hippolyte, too, was cautious; on hearing that she was going to Paris, he only said, "C'est malheureux," and that he should come and see her. Honorine, indeed, always maintained "qu'il n'était ni pour elle, ni pour Louise, qu'il était trop riche, qu'il ne regarderait pas les domestiques," and that therefore she never thought of him, "aucunement;" even affirming — Heaven pardon her the falsehood!—that if she were never to see him again she would care no more than the first day she met him. As for his intentions, however, as the conferences were more frequent and prolonged than ever, I could only hope that she was deceiving us, and that he was not deceiving her. I should like, I thought, to see Honorine mistress—in prospect, at least—of a very pretty homestead, with garden, orchard, meadows, cow, cider-press, a nice house, charming granaries, well-stocked farm-

yard, and "every thing to make life desirable."

A day or two before we left Les Rosiers M. Charlier came down to go over the inventory with us, and, we supposed, to fleece us accordingly. Knowing by Paris experience how keen-eyed and exacting are French *propriétaires*, we were surprised, on the whole, at his moderation. At any rate, the affair was courteously conducted, which it might not have been by his sharper wife. Honorine attended, bristling her feathers, fiercely on the watch to do battle for us, and full of the most republican equality in manners and language with M. Charlier, whom she considered neither *juste* nor *raisonnable*. In one matter, where she accused him of having gone back from his promise, she afterwards mimicked, with great spirit, the scene which she conceived to have taken place between him and the "dame à Paris," whom she justly regarded as his prompter, and gave especially her termagant tones and furious advice. She expressed utter scorn of his subjugation to his wife; a man, she says, should never allow a woman any part in his affairs, and especially should never break his promise for a woman. A woman's word, says she, "c'est frivole, ce n'est rien," but a man's

ought always to be sacred. On these subjects her views certainly differed much from those of Constance, a former servant of ours—a sensitive creature, of fiery temperament, vehement convictions, and *esprit* almost amounting to genius. *She* stood up earnestly for her own sex; and when I repeated to her a French gentleman's assertion that in every French household the women governed, she said, "Very true, and quite right too," and strengthened her opinion by historical and political examples. "Voyez Napoléon," she said; "did not all go wrong with him when he divorced Joséphine? And when Madame Adelaïde died, did not Louis Philippe fall into errors and lose his throne?"

But I must return to Les Rosiers—only, however, to leave it, for we set off at last, with every incident that could unsentimentalize our parting. A foggy, drizzling, unlovely day hid from sight all the beauties that winter had spared to our knolls and dells; and we had a good deal of trouble in the *déménagement*, as the man who undertook it did not perform it properly. Hence ensued a farewell scene of French screaming—the same thing said fifty times over, only in different accents and with different gestures, and tempers, to judge from

appearances, all boiling over to exasperation. Honorine's withering "C'est ridicule" was promptly applied; but at last she judged the case too bad for even that, and stood by in silence with her arms crossed — the last and most desperate resource of French sensibility. The *porteuse d'eau*, who had been trying to outbargain us in the morning, moved by a small present, testified so much sympathy for us as also to stand by with her hands under her apron. A hint from Honorine about going to the *maire* finally brought the *voiturier* to reason, and, fetching a second cart, he took away the effects and herself, who I hope forbore from quarrelling with him all the way up to Paris.

We waited a long while at the "Étoile du Nord," and might have waited forever, our driver having no idea of keeping his appointment. He had gone off instead to St. Cloud, where there was a concourse of people, "gone," said Madame Allard, "to fetch Louis Napoleon to Paris." This suddenly recalled to us the little insignificant fact that the Empire was to be proclaimed that day. So we waited for the omnibus, and discoursed with the jolly old landlady, who was very conversationally disposed, and who, while eating her

dinner without any discomposure, and with hearty enjoyment, gave us worlds of gossip on all possible subjects. I began with inquiries after her newly-married daughter, who, she assured us, was perfectly happy, pleased with Paris, her lodgings, her husband, who was very good to her, and a *fort aimable garçon.* "Je vous assure, madame," she said, "qu'il n'est pas possible d'avoir plus de bonheur."

Musing on the varieties of female destiny, we went on our journey, and in a few hours were installed in our pleasant *appartement* in the Rue St. Dominique; and from that time Les Rosiers, with its green, sunny solitudes, its woods and gardens, its roses and orange-trees, was no more to us than a dream.

I may as well here wind up Honorine's *affaire de cœur*, which began like a true romance, and ended—like a French one. One day Hippolyte came to see her at Paris, and brought her flowers. Another day Louise came, and talked earnestly and gloomily with her. The next day she told us, with scornful laughter, that M. Langlois was going to marry a girl of nineteen, who had a *petite propriété.* From that time I withdrew all my interest from the engaging young mason, whom I regarded as an utter flirt. But as my regard for

our good Honorine went on increasing, I was glad to learn, some time after we had left Paris, that she was married to a man whom she described as the "meilleur homme du monde," and that she had "bien tombé dans son mariage."

CHAPTER XV.

SIBYL'S LOT—AND MINE.

OUR life in Paris this second winter was just like the last, except that we beheld the Empire proclaimed and the emperor married. I shall not soon forget my momentary vision of that young girl Eugénie hurrying along the shining quays to her strange fate, and to the dangerous palace that beckoned her onward—a snow-pale bride, from head to foot white as a lily, with a look of misgiving, even terror, on her fair face, that suggested she would fain have driven back again. Well, she was nothing to us, and we had our own cares and pleasures, hopes and regrets. One trouble was that we now saw and heard nothing of M. Émile. He had been relegated, as he expected, to a garrison town in a remote department, and, as *we* did not expect, had ceased to correspond with us.

As for our other friends, some changes were going on among them. Hermine had married her elderly comte, and was a leader of Paris fashion—just the gay, *spirituelle*, dazzling little

dame that I had anticipated. She kept up scanty relations with us, whom in truth she had never been really fond of, having probably never quite forgiven her lord's persistent admiration of Sibyl. Aurélie ere long fulfilled my half-formed expectation, and is now the wife of my cousin Horace. I hope she had for him something more than the liking she professed to consider sufficient in marriage; at any rate she is an excellent and attached wife, and, if perhaps a little condescending, and disposed in a quiet way to manage for them both, fulfills all her duties as I should have expected from an upright and high-minded character like hers. He has a good foreign chaplaincy in a considerable German town, with a pleasant society.

The Marquis de Clérimont met us in society now and then, but Sibyl was so decidedly chilling that he could not renew his former possibly homage. He took to flirting with others, and, I believe, at last with all deliberation made a *mariage d'argent.*

And now the time drew near when I must needs return to my English home. When at last I spoke of it decidedly to Sibyl, she suddenly burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Beatrice, I must go to England with you."

A cold trembling seized me; at first I was bewildered—the next moment I understood. After some fencing in the dark, some broken words and attempted reserves, she told all her story. Émile had loved her—as she believed and as she said—intensely, and she had refused him. This happened just before we left Paris for Les Rosiers.

I asked her why she had done it?

"Oh, I don't know," she said; "I thought him too young, I believe; and then I had always said so positively that I should never marry again, certainly not a Frenchman. I wanted to return to my English life, and to shake myself free from the Fleury family. I suppose he had not then quite laid hold of my heart; anyhow I refused him; I believe I even got angry with him. I had forbidden him to say any more about it; and I believe at Les Rosiers he felt quite hopeless. He certainly never ventured, even by a look, to betray any feeling—and yet, Beatrice, I was beginning then to be *haunted* by him."

"But the marquis?" I inquired.

Sibyl colored very painfully, hesitated, and said, "I tried to divert my thoughts, which were sometimes too bitter, and I believe in my pride I wanted to disguise them from Émile,

whom I was almost provoked with for not in the least trying again to win me. But I could not go on, and, after Émile had gone, I contrived without any actual *éclaircissement* to put an end to the affair. I was very wrong, I know, in thus playing false to my heart, and I knew I deceived others. I saw that you noticed my sadness after the marquis left, and mistook the cause. But I knew I had done *him* no harm—as for others, I hope not. Beatrice," she added, after a pause, "did Émile ever make love to you?"

"Never!" I earnestly replied.

"Well," she resumed, "that was another thing—another complication going on at the same time. I saw him, as I thought, about to console himself with you, and I tried to be pleased to think it was all very right, and to hope that you would like him. But that, too, I found I could not do; which first showed me the whole truth—and oh how I cried all those weary weeks! But I felt piqued, and only made myself more cold and disagreeable, and in that one last visit—do you remember it?—when he was so changed, I almost felt to dislike him. Oh, Beatrice! how men and women do misunderstand and plague each other!"

"Can nothing be done?" I asked.

Sibyl shook her head. "It has gone too far," she said; "he has made up his mind to it at last, and I have no right to torment him any more."

Yet a kind of opening was given, which I ventured to avail myself of. Émile kept up some correspondence with our good friends Aurélie and her mother, and in a letter of the latter's I inserted a kind message, which produced one or two letters from him. In the last of these he spoke plainly. He used, in speaking of Sibyl, language of the tenderest, even the most passionate admiration; but he avowed that he had given her up.

"I *have* loved her, I acknowledge," he said. "One does not see so beautiful a thing for nothing. At once, before one has thought of loving her, she becomes, for wonder and for worship, the Venus—what do I say?—the Madonna of one's imaginings. Henceforth in one's most aërial dreams, in life's strangest events, in the world's most exciting commotions, one places in the midst that figure of divine gayety and grace; across all storms she shoots like a lightning-glance; in play or poem *she* is the enchanting heroine. You will think me raving; but in truth Sibyl seems to me a

being one might see but once, and go mad on the remembrance of. I never saw—I may just have imagined—such a woman, but my dream did not half paint her; the reality adds ever a light, a shade that I could not have divined. Sometimes I think it would be enough to sit and watch her for life.

"Now that I have said all this, mademoiselle, I must add that I have wholly given up the hope of marrying her. The very extravagance of my language is a proof that my feeling is not one on which to ground a life-long union. I could not make such a woman happy; she could never love me, and would have a thousand wants that my inferior nature would not supply. I trust you, therefore, not to betray to her what I have just said; I should blush for her to read the ravings of such a delirium. And if I were tempted to try to work on her feelings, and create an affection she is now far from having for me, I should be only selfish. My prospects are too unsettled. I am coming to a crisis. My former enemy has gained the ear of the Minister of War; an order of arrest was once actually made out against me, and its execution was only delayed by the good offices of a friend. But if I do not fall in this coming campaign, which is very probable, and which I

shall not much regret, I shall be a *déporté* to Cayenne, and I could not possibly even wish to associate a tender creature like your sister with such a lot. No, I have subdued the worst of my pain, and have resigned a vision which probably could never have been realized."

I wondered that Émile should not have discovered, under the ideal charm of Sibyl's exterior, that, with her warm tender heart and sweet temper, she was the easiest possible person to live with—that she was thoroughly *bonne enfant.* I also felt that such romantic idealization prevented one's judging of the real seriousness and depth of his attachment, which alone could justify a great sacrifice on Sibyl's part.

Bound by his injunction, I read only the latter part of this letter to Sibyl, expressing, however, my own conviction of his undying attachment. But she only answered, mournfully, "It must not be altered; it is best as it is." She was, perhaps, secretly hurt at his tone of complete acquiescence to fate.

We went to England, and there from time to time we heard of Émile—once heard from himself; and I judged with pain, from various indications, that something—I know not if I

should call it deterioration, but something that took from the fresh charm of his nature—was growing upon him. His cynical bitterness was now a fixed quality; he assumed a hard, worldly tone; he seemed to despair of every thing; his past, he said, was "mort et enseveli," and he did not wish to revive it. He ridiculed his youthful enthusiasms, and expressed a disbelief in all goodness; he was not gloomily or ostentatiously misanthropic, but quietly and coldly cynical.

One thing was certain; he still never bowed the knee in Rimmon's temple; indeed, his contempt for those who did—that is, for the society he lived amidst—was only too marked for his safety. And with all this alteration, there was yet in him, as his friends described, at times a fascination beyond that of a romantic and ardent youth—beautiful flashes, like magic northern lights, across his desolate wintery life.

Well, I must not linger over this painful period. The crisis came in a year or two. A small fraternity of ardent liberals had for some time been watched by the Government; one of these, more indiscreet than the others, had let drop in public words betraying revolutionary designs. Émile, who was not compro-

mised, and could have escaped, rallied to his friend's side, did his best first to save him, and then to share his doom. Both were arrested, and, after a brief though rigorous imprisonment, Émile was degraded from his rank in the army and sent *en perpétuité* to Algeria.

He had wished not to let us know his fate; oppressed by sadness and consequent ill health, he had expected soon to die there, and desired that we should not be saddened with the knowledge. But Sibyl's loving vigilance could not be balked, nor could his heroic conduct, which she contrived to discover from his friends, fail to nerve that tender nature to equal heroism.

"I am so glad, Beatrice," she said, "that all doubt is put an end to now; for the future I feel that my place is by Émile; and oh, if I can in any way soothe or help him, what a blessing will he not be to me! If there is anything good and noble in me—I am sure I have given little reason to suppose there is—he awakened and called it forth."

Sibyl and I—I could not leave her now—went accordingly to Algeria, under the care of Horace and his wife. Émile and she were married, and love each other to this day with that love which alone suffices for happiness.

He has at last returned to his crushed, tortured, distracted France, to do for her what a man may.

* * * * * *

This sentence—added lately—forms a fit conclusion to my old journal of twenty years ago. Of course all is changed since then—except that what was my principal interest then has resulted now in the perfect union of two well-matched and beautiful natures. I myself have not been so happy. I do not complain, nor greatly wonder; under the apparently random destinies of various individualities there is a moral order, clear as inevitable, did we but know it. Sibyl's nature was one predestined to and deserving happiness. The unselfish sweetness, the patient serenity with which she accepted life and its cares, in the end usually secure the smiles of that not quite irrational divinity, Fortune. I was different. I am Beatrice Walford still, and I have fetched all these pictures of the past out of ghost-land.

THE END.

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